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Feature Detective Story

"ON THE YELLOWS"

by

FRANK BLIGHTON

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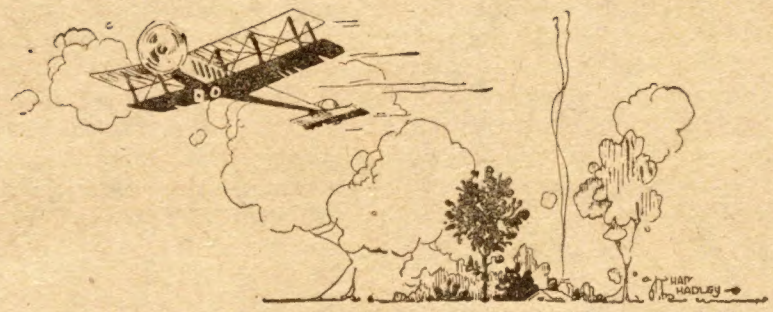

ON THE YELLOW

by Frank Blighton

CHAPTER ONE

THE YELLOW TAXICAB

SHRILL and penetrating above the din of traffic, the starter's whistle summoned a taxicab to the door of the Hotel Bavaria just as Bruce Carver, detective, came around the corner of the block, perhaps fifty yards distant.

A yellow vehicle in the waiting "line" darted forward and drew up beneath the enormous marquee of steel and plate glass that extended from the hotel's spacious portals to the sidewalk's edge.

By the starter stood two men. At sight of one of them Carver quickened his pace, for he recognized Frederick Graham, the only son of George Graham, banker. He could not be mistaken, for the youth was tall, with fair hair, a round, almost cherubic face, although his profile also disclosed a thrust of chin and an aggressive nose, which signified wilfulness, if not strength of character.

His companion had dark hair, a pair of tortoise-shell spectacles bestrode a huge and misshapen nose, with a pendant ribbon whose other end vanished beneath a tan-colored duster or raincoat he was wearing, and he carried a cane whose end was curved so that it hung over his arm, terminating in a silver tip. The chap doffed his hat to enter the vehicle, and the detective fancied that the fellow's mien was furtive, as if anxious to be out of that locality without delay.

The sleuth stepped rapidly inward toward the façade of the hotel to glimpse the license number of the cab. His maneuver was clever, but the spurt of oily smoke as the taxi started away obliterated everything, leaving even the red warning signal a pinpoint. The numerals on the license plate were as completely submerged as if it had suddenly been tossed into the Hudson River.

Carver kept on walking, although he had an odd sense of futility.

He wanted to see young Graham and to keep him in sight, without being himself seen, rather badly just then. The youth was of age, but wayward and disinclined to respect his father's wishes; his experience as a soldier overseas had made him resentful of the ultra-sober atmosphere of his father's bank. He yearned for "action"; hence Carver's employment by the elder Graham to "chaperone" Freddy without the latter's knowledge.

Six weeks before, much to Carver's

chagrin, Freddy dropped into nowhere. By a fantastic circumstance, only five or six minutes before Carver had found him again, and now had lost him ere he could even "trail" him in another cab, for the tide of evening theatre traffic was quite heavy in New York and the yellow cab had slid into it as easily as an eel disappears into its native element.

"Hang that collar-button!" said Carver to himself as he walked on past the Hotel Bavaria, thinking what he had better do next.

He paused and lighted a cigarette under the resplendent lights of a theatre a few steps beyond. The gorgeous swirl of color informed passing crowds that "All Orchids," a summer musical comedy, was playing there and that Irene Morse, a dainty, petite girl, was the star. Her photographs in color adorned the lobby, and Carver glanced at them in a chagrined fashion while thinking of how he had caught sight of Freddy Graham again.

He was dressing for dinner, preparatory to haunting the various "night-life" cafés and "roofs" of the city, with scant hope of perhaps stumbling upon his charge, when he dropped a collar-button. As he stooped to recover it, beneath the drawn shade of his apartment, which was immediately behind the Hotel Bavaria, he clearly discerned Frederick Graham's figure in a window opposite.

Carver promptly "doused" the light in his own room, fumbling frantically for his missing collar-button on the floor and listening to a scrap of conversation from across the narrow areaway.

At this instant young Graham remarked to some other occupant of the same room:

"Bunko! Well, that's the right name. Did you think I'd fall for a lot of cheap stuff like that? See here; you evidently think I'm as big a boob as I look. Think again!"

"Easy!" growled the other man. "No use yelling about it, is there?"

"I'm not yelling," petulantly retorted young Graham. "But you put it up to me. Suppose I'd fallen for that advice—what then?"

Carver did not wait to hear more. He found the collar-button, jabbed it into place, slipped to the door, where his dependable valet and all-around assistant, "Clutch" Casey, was waiting with the balance of his attire, and then bounded for the street.

He had just missed his quarry.

"In a yellow taxicab," he muttered, "and it has a black top. Well, there's fourteen thousand odd taxicabs in New York City. It's a cinch I'll not catch up with that young smart alec by trying to follow this one. Huh!"

CHAPTER TWO

"MY WANDERING BOY"

CARVER stalked back to the hotel and sent his card to the night manager. It was ten minutes before he could be located and ten more before Carver could get an audience with him after ascertaining from the room clerk that Frederick Graham was "not registered" there.

The night manager, however, proved courteous.

"Franklyn A. Alley, registering from Louisville, Ky., took that room this morning," said he. "He was alone, but he had a caller this evening. He has checked out."

From the head porter the night manager learned that Mr. Alley's baggage had been sent to the Pennsylania terminal. Carver, balked again, thanked him and took his leave.

He went back to his own apartment. After a few minutes' thought he reached for the telephone, calling a suburban number in the section immediately north of New York City, where the elder Graham kept his summer home.

"Hello! Is that you, Baxter?" asked Carver. "Please tell Mr. Graham that A. B. C. is on the private wire and wishes to talk with him."

Presently the hearty tones of George Graham boomed "Good-evening, sir!"

"I called," said Carver, somewhat lamely, after returning the greeting, "to tell you that I've just seen Freddy to-night."

"Well, that's odd! I've just finished talking to him on the phone myself," returned the banker. "He's coming home at ten o'clock to-morrow."

"I'm greatly relieved," said Carver. "You see, I didn't get a chance to talk to him!"

"Well, it's just as well, perhaps," returned the banker. "I was on the point of ringing you, to ask you to be here to-morrow when he arrives, when you rang me. The young rascal put one over on me to-day, and he did it rather neatly, too."

"How was that, sir?"

"Why, he came into the bank when he knew I'd be absent at a board of director's meeting and had his check certified for twenty-five thousand dollars!"

"Yes!" Carver thrilled as he remembered the remark about "bunko" and the rather furtive appearance of Freddy's companion. The youngster had evidently just missed "stepping into something."

"Oh, it was his own money—part of a special fund left by his mother," said the elder Graham. "He had a perfect right to have the check certified, but I was naturally wondering what he would do with so much cash when he told me he would explain everything after he'd fly home to-morrow morning!"

"Fly!" incredulously echoed Carver.

"That's where he's been for the past six weeks—over at Hempstead," chuckled his father. "He said so himself. Now, I can't be here when he gets in, but I'll be back around noon, I think. So I want you here when Freddy comes. Baxter will steer him into the library, and I didn't tell Freddy I wouldn't be able to be here. I don't want him to go away until I've had a talk with him—understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"That actress girl and her mother are to be here, too," went on the banker, his voice noticeably colder. "I imagine there'll be a show-down, eh?"

"There may be," said Carver. "Well, I'll be there. Good-night."

"The actress girl!" muttered Carver as he hung up the receiver. "Miss Morse, beyond doubt. Funny I never could get a glimpse of them together! For an actress, she isn't such a bad sort. Mother takes her to and from each performance. Mother motors with her, watches her play tennis and sits on the bank when she rows a boat in Central Park. Well, it's a queer world, and nobody knows what's just around the corner."

Carver and Clutch Casey, his friend, motored out to the Graham residence, arriving at nine the following morning. Baxter, the aged butler, took Carver into the library. The windows opened to the east. Long Island lay in that direction, and if Freddy was really "flying home" he would be in sight without seeing his waiting "chaperone."

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN

THE knoll on which the mansion stood was backed up by a miniature precipice festooned with rambler roses and its summit crowned with wild shrubs and grass that comprised a real jungle.

From the library windows, where Carver now sat, he looked over the top of the wall that gave the place privacy from the boulevard, across that thoroughfare and to an old mill just beyond, set on the border of a pond, fed by a little creek at its upper end.

Bruce knew at once that if Freddy Graham was to "fly home" he would not only come from the east, where Hempstead lay, but also probably make his landing in a level bit of ground, perhaps five acres in extent and unobstructed except for a few trees.

He was ensconced in a fat Turkish rocker, staring out of the window and enjoying an after-breakfast cigar, when Baxter, the aged butler, tiptoed in and whispered:

"Miss Morse and her mother are in the morning room, sir. Mr. Graham has also telephoned from the city to ask if you are here. Do you wish to speak to him?"

Bruce glanced at his watch. It was just five minutes to ten o'clock.

"No. Tell him I'm here," said he.

As he glanced out of the window again his roving eye picked up a small spot which had been suddenly penciled against the pastel sky of the languorous June day. It grew rapidly larger until it was the size of a bird. Then it continued to expand as the expected airplane drove toward the place where he sat literally "on the wings of the morning."

As it approached Bruce pulled at his cigar. Meanwhile Miss Morse came out on the lawn, and Baxter, the aged and imperturbable butler, walked slowly down the driveway toward the gate, evidently to meet the returning prodigal.

Bruce could see Miss Morse plainly. He wondered what part in the home-coming she was to play. She was already a prima donna, sang exquisitely, danced divinely, and was not at all the typical "chorus girl" type which Freddy's father abhorred.

Her presence, however, argued that she was also informed of the manner in which Freddy would come home, and as his plane topped the last rise above the pasture land, with its motor trumpeting like a flock of enraged elephants, Bruce caught her mobile face wreathed in a smile of high expectancy.

Then the aviator cut off the engine. He swooped steeply and silently down, like a giant albatross, making a perfect landing in the old pasture, less than an eighth of a mile away.

Bruce Carver smiled in turn. This was far better than he had dared to hope when the yellow cab, with Freddy blotted out of view within it, had smudged its license number with the turgid exhaust and vanished from the detective's ken the night before.

The "prodigal son" was really returning to the family hearthstone, and Carver wondered mildly if his fond but somewhat irascible parent would "kill the fatted calf" before dinner was announced.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRUCK DOWN!

TO Carver's immense surprise, Freddy Graham was the airplane's sole occupant. He had not foreseen this. He noted it, however, when the lone figure descended from the fuselage.

He doffed his aviator's helmet and goggles and slipped out of a heavy leather coat. Then he replaced this with a Norfolk jacket and jaunty cap, after carefully stowing away his aviation "gear" in a compartment beneath his seat. He was already wearing knickerbockers, golf stockings and low shoes.

Then he started across the pasture land, heading for the crown of the dam. This action took him momentarily out of view behind the old mill, and just about here Baxter also crossed the main road from the gate in the wall and started to walk around the same structure to meet the scion of the family, as the elder Graham had, no doubt, instructed him to do.

Meanwhile Miss Morse paced to and fro restlessly on the lawn.

Bruce glanced again toward the corner of the old mill. The two men should be rounding it by now. As he peered he saw Baxter coming around it alone.

The old man was staggering.

His limbs seemed to be half palsied. His hands fairly hooked at the air in semi-mesmeric gestures of dismay, if not despair.

Bruce leaped to the window-sill, dropped to the lawn, ran past the star of "All Orchilds" like a deer, shot down the drive, through the gate and across the road beyond toward the old mill.

Baxter's face might have been that of a corpse. He mumbled something incoherently and gestured around the corner with horror in his old eyes.

Bruce leaped past him and ran around the jutting edge of the structure, his automatic pistol flashing into view as he came upon the scene.

Just a few feet beyond, stretched at full length on the green grass, with the sunlight playing in the fair hair from which the jaunty cap had fallen, lay the form of Frederick Graham. His face was more pallid than the butler's—and for a reason.

The dastardly blow struck by some assailant had evidently taken him quite unawares, and the slight depression of the left frontal temple bone, triangular in shape,

was enough. From it depended a trickle of blood.

Carver grew numb. His heart almost stopped beating; then he pulled himself together and leaped toward the prone figure after one swift glance around—a glance which revealed no sign of any one whatever.

Nor was there a sign of any weapon near the ominously still figure. If Baxter had struck down his employer's son he must have tossed whatever he had struck him with into the pond.

The whole thing was too eerie for belief. A vagrant bee, "zipping" from flower to flower, paused to test the crimson spot on the ground and buzzed angrily away, just as Baxter tottered back into Carver's view.

If the old man had done this, then he was a most competent actor, for he was still breathing stertorously, tottering unsteadily, and his frantic hands now and again were still clawing feebly at—nothing.

Just as the detective started to stoop over the prone figure of Freddy Graham there was a little flutter like the wings of a wounded bird as Irene Morse swept up with swishing skirts.

As she glanced at the youth on the ground she gave one poignant moan and fainted. Carver caught her as she sagged earthward.

He stood like a man in a trance, glaring around.

For the first time since arriving on the scene Bruce Carver sensed movement. He blinked and shook his head. He could not be quite sure that he was not the victim of some hallucination as he discerned a tawny gleam through the willows—a silent but steady movement as if a panther were padding away among them.

Then he saw that the willows did not move, but that the object did. It was beyond the brush and in the highway, which continued past the Graham residence. It was, in fact, a yellow taxicab, but the willows now hid its license plate, the same as the smudge from the exhaust had done the night before in front of the Hotel Bavaria.

Almost at once it vanished around a curve in the road.

CHAPTER FIVE

MORE MYSTERY

"STAY here until I get back," said Carver to Baxter, who nodded, as if unable to otherwise reply.

The detective did not know whether Freddy was alive or dead, but he did know that if he was dead it would be unwise to move him, since it was then "a coroner's case," and he surmised that it might be dangerous to move him, even if living, ere a physician could examine him, lest the feeble spark of life, if any, should thereby be snuffed out.

Carver resolved to get back quickly with stimulants. Meantime, since Miss Morse did not regain consciousness, he was obliged to carry her past the corner of the mill. Casey, standing in the door of the garage, saw his employer's signal and hurried to his aid. Together they carried the girl to the house.

Mrs. Morse, on seeing her daughter's limp form, gave a frightful shriek and also fainted.

Carver left Casey dashing water on both women's faces and hurriedly called a maid, who came with smelling salts and went into the room after telling him there was a medicine closet on the upper floor.

Carver ran up the stairs, whisked open the door to the cabinet, seized a bottle labeled "brandy," ran down and out of the house back toward where he had left young Graham.

He turned the corner of the mill, running at top speed.

Next instant he went sprawling, the bottle flying out of his hand as he fell over the figure of the old butler, now huddled in a heap on the ground. Retrieving the bottle, Carver glared around.

There was no sign of Graham's body.

He scurried to the spot. He could discern no traces that might not have been made by either Baxter himself or Miss Morse when there a few minutes before. He ran back to Baxter, forcing the uncorked bottle between his lips.

"What's happened?" demanded the detec-

tive when the draught revived the old servitor and he aided him to stand erect.

Baxter mumbled something.

"Speak up!" sharply commanded the detective. "Where's Freddy?"

"I heard him moan, sir, and started to tell you to hurry. I—I must have collapsed myself. You see, it was all so dreadful and sudden——"

"Go to the house and phone his father—quick!"

"Yes, sir," mumbled the butler. "But where do you suppose Frederick could have gone, sir?"

"That," said Carver, with a sudden narrowing of his stern eyes, "is what I've got to find out. Did he move?"

"I—I—can't be sure, sir. But I am sure I heard him moan."

Carver sprinted for the pond's edge. The sunlight splayed its depths. He could see minnows flashing back and forth and the lily-strewn bottom. If Baxter had hurled the body into the pond, then it should be there and quite near the shore, unless he had carried it out on the dam.

Detective Carver next ran over the dry stones composing the dam's crown. There was no body visible. If young Graham was not yet dead the shock of immersion might have revived him. Suddenly he glanced toward the airplane. Then he kept on across the dam and ran toward the machine. A dazed aviator might possibly have gone that way.

But there was no sign of Frederick Graham there. The machine was exactly as he had left it, even the prints of his shoes leaving being visible. Carver lifted the seat to make sure the leather coat was still there. It was, with the helmet. He inspected both.

Then he turned and ran back across the top of the dam and to the far corner of the mill, scanning the ancient edifice for some clue. The door was locked. More than that, a cobweb filled the keyhole. The unused wheel pit leered back at him, absolutely empty.

It was altogether uncanny. The first circumstance might be accounted for, and the detective dashed around the far corner of the mill for a clue.

It was there.

The boulevard's macadam did not extend more than eighteen feet at this spot. By the side the soil showed where the yellow taxicab had stood. Carver at once saw that the vehicle had been out of view from the house, because the angle of the wall inclosing the grounds across the road here rose sharply, following the curve of the knoll on which the house rested.

But the cab had stood there, beyond doubt. And there had been plenty of time for an occupant of the vehicle to come around this corner of the mill unseen and intercept Frederick Graham after he had crossed on the summit of the dam—and strike him down. It was not much of a clue, and he had no proof that anything of that sort had occurred, although it might have occurred, and that, too, prior to Baxter's coming around the opposite corner. Or Baxter might have seen the assault. Either was possible.

He hurried back to the house and ran to the telephone.

"Give me Spring 6000!" he curtly demanded.

"Police headquarters!" came a gruff voice over the wire.

"This is former Detective Sergeant Bruce Carver speaking. Give me the detective bureau, please."

The connection was a quick one.

"Broadcast this, please," said Carver, after revealing his identity and whereabouts. "Yellow taxicab, license number unknown. Leaky radiator, front right side. Diamond studs on rear tires. Left rear tire with patch and wound with tape. Or it may have a brand-new tire on it when located. Try the cab line in front of the Hotel Bavaria first. Cab is now somewhere in Harlem and driving south, probably. Hold occupants as suspects in assault with intent to kill and probably murder!"

This done, he hurried to the room where Clutch Casey was still with Mrs. Morse and her daughter.

CHAPTER SIX

ANTECEDENTS OF "MR. ALLEY"

IN the hall the detective met Baxter.

"Mr. Graham has already left New York," said the butler. "Oh, sir, what shall I say to him when he arrives?"

"Refer him to me," said Carver, without checking his stride.

Irene Morse was lying on a sofa and hysterically sobbing when he entered. Her mother was sitting by her in an easy-chair and Casey was solicitously fanning the elderly woman.

The prima donna tried to sit up as the detective entered. Her mother restrained her.

"Is—is Freddy dead?" she sobbed.

"I think not," said Carver courteously. "At least Baxter heard him moan. We have sent for a physician. Meanwhile, as one who has confidential relations with Frederick's father, may I ask a question or two?"

He was watching them both intently. Irene did not immediately reply. Her mother stiffened. She looked toward her daughter uncertainly.

"Is it necessary?" she asked, a trifle haughtily.

"It might help," said Carver, with a level gaze at the elder woman. "You see, this is a rather bad mess. If the authorities find that Mr. Graham's son will not live, they may be inclined to detain all of us as material witnesses. That might interfere with your daughter's work—professionally, I mean."

Mrs. Morse seemed suddenly more distrait.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed. "I had not thought of that."

"For one thing," said the detective, following up this slight but obvious advantage, "the notorious would be exceedingly harmful—notwithstanding, I am sure, that Miss Morse is entirely ignorant of what occurred shortly after Frederick Graham made his landing from the airplane. I do not wish to cause either of you undue anxiety—much less delay. I will try to be brief, if you will try to be candid."

He paused. Mrs. Morse, however, seemed to resent his frankness.

"Really," said she, "I do not know why you should question us at all."

"I thought," replied Carver with ominous quietness, "that I had made it plain. If I have not, then I will add that Frederick's father employed me to guard his son against any mischance. I fear that I have been remiss in my employment."

"What is it you wish to know?" asked the elderly woman after a pause.

"I should like to ask you if the name Morse is a professional name or your family name."

The older woman blanched and grew rigid. Her daughter seemed galvanized into new strength. She sat bolt upright and stared at Carver, as if this simple query had blotted her recent ghastly memory of Frederick Graham's condition out of recollection.

It was her mother who replied:

"The name, as you have surmised, sir, is a professional one."

"Would you mind if I asked your family name?"

"I am Mrs. Lemuel Fairfax, and my daughter's first name is Irene."

"Thank you," said Carver.

He was a bit puzzled by her sudden change in attitude. There was a hint of hilarity and no little hauteur at the utterance of the family name. She gave it as if every one in the world must have known it and, knowing it, must also know that there could be no reason for further questions, even under the circumstances.

"My name is Bruce Carver," said the detective casually. "Will you permit another query?"

His tone was deferential, although authoritative. Mrs. Fairfax bowed.

"May I ask if you and your daughter are native New Yorkers or from some other locality?"

"We are from Louisville, Kentucky," she replied.

Like a flash of lightning illuminating an exceedingly dark night, Carver's keen mind

reverted to the scene in the Hotel Bavaria when the room clerk had given the residence of the occupant of the apartment where he had first glimpsed Frederick Graham.

He took what he knew was "a shot in the dark" with his next query, but the moment it left his lips he knew he had "scored."

"Just one more question, if you please. Do either you or your daughter happen to know, casually or otherwise, a gentleman from Louisville who calls himself Franklyn A. Alley?"

Mrs. Fairfax looked at him with eyes full of such misery that Carver half repented the query. Her daughter, however, glanced toward him with an enigmatic expression compounded of curiosity and fear. Then both faded out. Defiance replaced them, and her eyes blazed angrily.

"Why did you ask my mother that question?" imperiously demanded the star of "All Orchids."

"Because," replied Carver slowly, choosing his words with extreme care while he noted their effect on the younger woman, "I saw Frederick Graham alive and well in his company last night and quite close to the theatre in which you were playing."

The girl still regarded him steadily, but with decidedly less asperity. Mrs. Fairfax seemed to summon all her self-command and a glance passed between them as the mother answered:

"Mr. Allen was, during the life of the late Colonel Fairfax, chief trainer for his stable of thoroughbreds. The colonel, of course, reposed much confidence in him. Mr. Alley has been quite kind to us since my husband's demise."

"We are getting on," said Carver almost cheerfully. "In view of what you have said, I assume Mr. Alley may also have been of some aid to you since you came to New York?"

The prima donna's keen eyes were still on the detective's inscrutable face. She spoke, however, after a very slight hesitation:

"Mr. Alley was largely responsible for my obtaining the position I have at present. But does that have anything to do with what has occurred this morning—here? Really, Mr. Carver, I am distressed beyond all words."

"Miss Fairfax," bluntly returned the detective, "I assure you that you have no monopoly of that condition of mind. I am also very much distressed, as well as mystified. I do not think that it is needful to ask either of you any more questions. Allow me to assure you that my assistant, Mr. Casey, and myself will scrupulously respect your confidence."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Fairfax, with evident relief. "Is there anything else you would care to suggest to us, sir?"

"Only this: I do not know, nor do I care to know, just now, the object of your call here to-day. I have a great deal on my mind as it is, and since Frederick's father may be due here any moment, and upon me devolves the duty of breaking this terrible news to him, perhaps it would be as well if no one else is present. I say that in all kindness."

Both women rose. Miss Morse extended her hand impulsively.

"You are very kind, and mother and myself are very grateful. But"— her voice faltered a trifle, despite her effort at self-control—"could I not see Frederick just a moment ere we take our leave? We were— quite—fond—of each——"

She could not finish the sentence.

Clutch Casey just here tipped his employer a warning wink and then slid silently out of the room.

Baxter's discreet cough caught his ear. The butler was in the doorway and beckoning; Carver hurried to him.

"Mr. Graham is waiting for you in the library, sir!"

Carter communicated the information to the women and hurried away.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A DISTRAUGHT DETECTIVE

"WELL, Carver, I see that you're a dependable sort," smiled the elder Graham as the detective entered the library. "Where's Fred?"

"Fred came, as he promised," temporized the harassed sleuth. "You can see the plane from here. He made a perfect landing—all by himself!"

"He did, eh?" chuckled the banker. "The boy's got good stuff in him, Carver; I always said so—didn't I?—even when he was the most restive."

"I wish you had been here yourself, sir. I think you would have admired his skill. But after that something else happened. If you will wait a moment I will summon Baxter. He was there before I was."

He hurried to the door.

"Never mind Baxter," said the banker curtly. "What happened?"

"I am very sorry to say that Frederick was basely assaulted and struck down while behind the mill and out of my view, sir. I was, of course, waiting here for him to be brought in by Baxter. I ran down when I saw Baxter reappear alone."

The elderly man suddenly blanched and sank into a chair.

"Go on, Carver; go on! Was he badly hurt?"

"I fear that he was, sir. I sent for a physician, but he has not yet arrived!"

At that moment a tap sounded on the library door.

Carver hurried to it. The banker sat, with a most woe-begone expression on his face, huddled into a heap. He seemed to grow smaller even as Carver watched him, while he slid back the folding doors.

A maid was standing there.

"Beg your pardon, sir, but the physician has arrived!"

"Send him in here—quick! Not a word to any one that he was wanted for Freddy —understand?"

The doctor entered and glanced to the figure huddled in the chair. The elder Graham's head had now fallen forward on his chest.

The doctor felt his wrist, then hastily opened his case.

"A glass of water, quick!" he directed.

The maid fled for it.

"How long ago did this happen?" brusquely asked the physician.

"A moment before you came in," returned Carver. "What is it, a shock?"

"I do not know. His heart is very weak."

Carver watched the needle sink into the flaccid flesh with an access of fresh desperation. He walked moodily from the room, cursing himself for a dolt!

Then he stopped as rigid as a pointer who scents a covey of game fowl. His head slid slowly forward. His eyes bulged as he gazed through the window of the hall down on the same scene as of the earlier morning.

Mrs. Morse (or Fairfax) and her daughter were at the gateway to the drive leading to the house from the highway below. A yellow taxicab stood there, and the man whom he had so recently discussed with the women was aiding them to enter it.

Try as he would, Carver could not see if the radiator was leaking, and the distance also prevented his noting the license number, as on two previous occasions.

Always that same infernal yellow taxicab appearing at some moment to baffle him.

"On the yellows, eh?" muttered the now distraught detective. "What a gibbering idiot I was to mention Alley's name to them! I told them I'd respect their confidence, but I don't recall that either of them said they'd respect mine!"

Then he gave a little start. He remembered his instructions to arrest the occupants of that cab—or was it another?"

"It's probably the same," said Carver thoughtfully. "Evidently they came out with him. Evidently again Mr. Alley, for reasons of his own, waited at the corner of the old mill out of sight, expecting some sort of a blow-off would happen in the house when they met Freddy's father. Quite evidently, also, he was taking a drive up the road to turn around—for he was headed the other way—when I saw him."

The detective shook himself out of his reverie. This was the most uncanny morning he had ever experienced. It was so weird at times that it seemed more like a horrid nightmare than a real experience.

He again remembered his instructions to

arrest the occupants of a yellow taxicab. He had not been told that an arrest had been made. That argued, in turn, that the cab had not yet entered New York, and this theory, in turn, lent an element of convincingness to the idea that maybe the cab that had stood at the far corner of the mill was the same one which the ladies were using to make their return journey.

Carver decided to countermand the instructions he had given to the New York police department. He had not a shred of evidence to substantiate a charge against Alley. Moreover, in view of what the women had told him, Alley could show—probably—that he had simply driven them to the mansion and waited for them to return.

So Carver sought a phone. The whole Graham case was a ghastly series of blunders and cross-purposes, he told himself, up to the tragic moment the young chap had been stricken by that invisible and unspeakably foul assailant.

He hurried back into the library. It was empty. He seized the telephone from the hook. It was a private wire and he was about to call police headquarters, as before, when he heard the unmistakable "click" of an extension somewhere on the same line.

He paused.

Then the other speaker gave a number. Carver, who thought at first that he was to be the victim perhaps of some invisible eavesdropper, in turn became one. His eyes narrowed, his brow contracted.

It was diabolically uncanny—that first word—for it was the same word which Frederick Graham had used in speaking to Alley when he (Carver) had been fumbling in the dark for his collar-button the night before.

The word was "bunko"!

Carver sat as immobile as a brass idol until the conversation was finished. Then he replaced the receiver with infinite care, rose and started out into the hall. He was far less distraught than when he had entered the room, although still far from being on firm ground.

Also he wanted Clutch Casey, and wanted him at once.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CLEVER WORK

AS if in answer to his unvoiced thought, Clutch Casey came limping in.

"Where in the world have *you* been?" asked Carver.

"Why, boss, I skidooed down to the cellar and hid out behind the furnace. Y'see, I piped off a bloke that I hadn't seen since before the war. He's a tough mug, too. I didn't want him to see me, and when I seen him comin' up the steps like he owned this place, why, I just nacherally fell down a row of other steps."

"Come out here," said Carver, "and spill the rest of it."

Clutch Casey did, with a simple directness that carried conviction.

"You're sure?" asked his employer.

"Boss, I ain't sure—after all these blow-offs this morning—that I'm alive. But I'm as sure of that bloke's identity as I am that I am alive!"

Carver mused for a moment or two.

"We've got to work fast," said he. "What time is it?"

"Twelve-thirty!" said Clutch.

"Jump in the car and go to our apartment. Bring back full equipment. By the way, bring back an evening newspaper, too. I'm interested in the second race at Belmont this afternoon."

"Sure thing, boss. Any word for downtown—I mean Centre street?"

"No, I'll attend to that myself. Hunt me up as soon as you get back."

The maid appeared on the veranda.

"Mr. Carver, didn't you take the brandy bottle from the medicine chest this morning?"

"Eh? Why, I believe I did. Yes, I'm sure I did."

"Well, the doctor wants it right away."

Carver waved his hand. "I'll get it," said he.

He had not thought of it since he had given the restorative to Baxter, unconscious on the ground. So he sought the butler and found him "laying the cloth" for lunch, as solemnly and as imperturbably as if the

father and son of the house would both be ready for the midday meal and he must be as punctual as always.

Baxter promptly returned the bottle, although a little sheepishly. Carver thanked him gravely, and pretended not to notice that at least half the flask was empty. Also, as he passed behind that rather groggy servitor, he noted a handkerchief hanging from his hip pocket, and took that with him as well.

He hurried with the flask directly to the room where the physician sat watching the elderly Graham. The banker's eyes were now open and, after a pony of the liquor had been duly swallowed, he glanced at the detective with somewhat of his old manner.

"Any news?" he quavered.

"A little," admitted Carver. "I'll have more later. I think this thing is going to straighten itself out before long. I'd much rather work just now than talk—and I know the doctor feels that you must rest instead of talking."

He hurried away without another word.

"Will you take luncheon, sir?" asked Baxter as he descended the stairs.

"No. But I'll be pleased to have you serve me with an early dinner," replied Carver. "Shall we say about five-thirty?"

"Very good, sir." Baxter waddled away unsteadily.

Carver lighted a fresh cigar, strode down the driveway and across toward the old mill. He walked around the corner with considerably more assurance than he had the last time.

The clouds were breaking—a little. He was not sure that Frederick Graham was still alive, but he felt reasonably sure that he could not be very far away—alive or dead.

About an hour later the detective intercepted the physician descending the driveway in his coupé. Carver signaled him to halt. Then he got into the machine unasked.

"My name is Bruce Carver, Doctor," said he. "May I inquire yours?"

"I am Doctor Phelps, sir."

"How is Mr. Graham?"

"He is no immediate danger, I take it, although he had a close call. How did it happen that I was so promptly on hand? The call came some time before, and I was, unfortunately, out of the office when it arrived."

"If you will turn the nose of your machine down this way," said Carver, blandly, "I will show you where his son was struck down this morning. That call was for your services for him—not his father. Then, the body disappeared, utterly. I would like the benefit of your opinion, professionally, as to how far an old man could—or might—carry the body of a young man in order to conceal it. Mind you," said Carver, as the coupé threaded its way gingerly around the old mill, "I do not say that an old man did—I merely say he could or might!"

"It was here," said Carver, telling the doctor to stop as a certain spot, "that the body lay. You see the stains of blood on the grass. Now, when I returned from the house, to which I had gone for stimulants for Fred, the body was gone, and Baxter, evidently in a collapse, was lying over there."

Doctor Phelps studied the distance between the two spots.

"Professionally speaking, I should say that a man of Baxter's age could not have carried the younger Graham a very great distance," said he. "Is there any other clue?"

"Oh, yes." Carver reached carefully into his pocket. "I must have come around the corner a bit too quick for the old chap. You see, Freddy was hurt in the left temple. If Baxter carried him he would either drag him, or else naturally carry him with his head on his shoulder. If the young man was still alive, he was also bleeding. Is that correct?"

"I doubt if he would suffer much hemorrhage after death," said the physician caustically.

"Exactly my idea, after I filched this blood-stained handkerchief from Baxter's pocket," said Carver, holding out the bit of evidence. "But Baxter wouldn't want to murder his employer's son, even if somebody else had half-completed the job, ere he undertook to hide the body. So it becomes merely a question of locating a the-

oretical point in a circle, whose diameter will be the distance that you think Baxter could have carried the body ere returning to the corner of the mill, to feign unconsciousness, while I was after that same bottle of brandy you called for a while back."

"What makes you so sure he carried the body instead of dragging it?" asked Doctor Phelps.

"Why, doctor, that's simple enough. To drag a heavy young man like Freddy Graham, who is about as tall or a little taller than I am, and perhaps almost as heavy, would be to leave a broad trail from where he had lain to wherever he was taken."

"I believe you're right," said Doctor Phelps.

"I know I'm right," said Carver. "I've been wrong in a lot of moves in this case—but I'm dead right in that deduction, besides being tremendously gratified at your confirmation of my idea."

"I don't exactly see what you're driving at," said the physician.

"I'll explain," said Carver.

His tense face and cold, steely eyes held the other man's like a magnet gripping a bit of steel.

Doctor Phelps was rather uneasy—for just a moment or two.

Ten minutes later Carver let himself out of the same coupé at the same point where he had first intercepted the physician. The coupé drove off and its rate of speed was by no means slow.

Carver walked up the driveway first.

The maid was at the door.

"You're wanted on the long-distance telephone," said she.

CHAPTER NINE

THE "THIRD DEGREE," A LA HARVARD

"POLICE headquarters, detective bureau, Inspector Lacey speaking," droned a voice in the receiver. "Is that you, Carver?"

"Yes, inspector."

"Well, Detectives Gordon and Marshall, of the uptown squad, intercepted that yellow taxicab, the one with the patch on the rear tire and the leaky radiator. Three occupants. Two ladies and a man. They brought them all downtown. What next?"

"Split 'em up for ten minutes. Take Alley and fingerprint him. Send Gordon over to the fingerprint department and pick out card of 1916, name of Betts. Compare prints. Tell Alley nothing. Phone me results. I'll give instructions later. Let me talk to the young woman, Miss Morse."

Presently the voice of the star of "All Orchids" was audible.

"I do not in the least understand this, Mr. Carver," said she spunkily. "Perhaps you will be good enough to explain."

"Very willingly. In the first place, it is chiefly an error of mine. You see, you omitted to tell me this morning that Mr. Alley had accompanied you out here and was waiting to escort you back."

"What has that to do with it?"

"Mr. Alley, while waiting for you in the cab after you'd come to the house, happened to drive away just as I stood by Freddy's body, after you had fainted. I saw the cab disappearing. I telephoned the police a meager description of it while Mr. Casey was trying to restore you. I did not know, at the time that Mr. Alley was in the cab, that he would return in it or you would take the same conveyance back to New York with him. Is that plain?"

"Oh, yes, thank you. Of course we may go now."

"On one condition," said Carver coldly. "You also forgot to be entirely frank with me this morning regarding your relations with Mr. Alley. I didn't know that at the time, either. But I am very well aware of one fact, that I since learned—and I learned it without stepping off the veranda of this house after you left. I will not discuss that fact over the telephone, but if you will be good enough to take the same yellow taxicab, with your mother, and come directly back here, I will ask that you be released at once. I need your help, you see."

"I promise," said the girl.

"Ask Inspector Lacey to take the phone," said Carver

The release of Miss Morse and her daughter was effected immediately. In less than an hour and a half the two women returned in the same cab. Carver met the vehicle at the gate, aided them to alight from it, and then turned to the driver.

"Hop off that box, and be quick about it," said he to the flat-faced driver, whose ophidian eyes suddenly contracted to pinpoints at the unexpected turn of things. "You're under arrest," continued the detective, "as a material witness."

The ugly muzzle of his automatic gave emphasis to the command. The driver obeyed. Carver "frisked" him with the deftness of long experience. The net yield was a short-barreled "gat" of large calibre. He handcuffed the chauffeur, locked him in the garage, which was both concrete-built and windowless, and then returned to the two women.

"This way," said Carver curtly. They followed him across the road, around the corner of the old mill, and straight to the place where the body of Frederick Graham had laid that afternoon.

"I brought you here," said Carver crisply, "because I want to be out of earshot of the house. Mr. Graham was so affected by the news that he collapsed. He is still in bed and under the care of his physician. I asked you this morning to be frank with me. You might have spared an old man much grief; you might have had your own chains broken sooner—if you had done as I asked."

Mrs. Fairfax's face was very pale, but she maintained a stoical silence. She had not spoken one word since their return. Carver looked at her and then at her daughter. The latter shivered. She drew closer to her mother, as if seeking whatever remnant of protection was available against the detective. The older woman's hand shook as she put her arm around her offspring.

"Pride of lineage and family name, and a determination to preserve both unsullied at any personal cost or sacrifice," went on Carver, as crisply as before, "are admirable qualities. You have done both. For that I assure each of you I have no criticism—merely compassion!"

"Compassion?" echoed Mrs. Fairfax, with bitter scorn.

"Yes, because both of you have been so sadly misled. You told me that Alley had been kind to you. You did not tell me that he was racing your late husband's horses under his own name; you did not tell me, either, Miss Irene, that while he had aided you to attain your present position as star in 'All Orchids' that you paid over to him, every week, the major part of your salary——"

"Why, how on earth did you know that?" gasped the girl. "I never said a word about it."

"I know blackmailers," said Carver. "How I know that Alley is one and that he blackmailed you is of no consequence. The fact is that I ascertained this after you left me. You might at least have been more candid—especially with Freddy Graham, dying or dead. Please remember that!"

They exchanged bewildered glances, but neither vouchsafed a reply. Carver's mood seemed to change. He looked away and took a long breath ere resuming.

"There are some things," he went on half-dreamily, "in fact, there are many things in the world for which there is no accounting at all by ordinary methods. By right of heritage, for instance, we are an eye-minded race; that is to say, we rely upon the eye to a large degree for our impressions. I did that this morning, and so did you, Miss Irene.

"Beyond all doubt we both saw Frederick Graham lying on the ground here, wounded badly if not fatally, bleeding and unconscious. I tried to spare you afterward all that I could. You asked to see him before you left. I could not tell you that his body had mysteriously vanished and that I knew nothing at all of its whereabouts."

He paused. The two women clung together as firmly as before and as silently.

"Now, see how strangely things worked out," continued Carver in the same dreamy way as before. "We think we live in a world of three dimensions. In reality, we live in four, or maybe more. It it were not so

this dreadful affair would not be now rapidly verging toward a solution.

"Did you ever know, Miss Irene," he abruptly inquired, "that your voice has four dimensions—the voice with which you won instant favor before the most blasé audiences in the world?"

The prima donna of "All Orchids" looked properly bewildered. Her curiosity impelled her to shake her head in a negative and to ask: "How?"

"Each note you sing," said Carver, with a rare smile, "has four distinctions—its length, pitch, intensity and timbre. All these are needful to distinguish it perfectly—to tell how long, how high, how loud and how rich it is. You never guessed, did you?"

She shook her head.

"Well, I never guessed that I was working the way you sing, either—in four dimensions—and working just the same when I thought I was going backward instead of forward. That's about all, I guess, except I want you to do me a little favor. I shall now usurp my employer's place and ask you to have an early dinner at Freddy's home. I may want to say something more at the dinner."

He turned to lead the way back toward the house.

"Why," exclaimed Mrs. Fairfax, "I thought you brought us over here to give us the 'third degree.' Instead, you finished your remarks like a college professor giving a lecture."

Carver made an ironical bow.

"I had the extreme misfortune of graduating from Harvard before I first wore a policeman's uniform," said he. "You can have no idea, madam, how difficult it is to live down the odium of such behavior prior to becoming a law-enforcement officer!"

CHAPTER TEN

RELEASING PRISONERS

ON re-entering the house Carver went directly to Mr. Graham's room. The banker was just wakening. He seemed rather improved, but the pathos of his eager, questioning gaze wrenched Carver's feelings afresh as he thought how much of this distress might have been avoided.

He thrust out his upright palm.

"No questions," he smiled at his client. "I'm still working and not talking. Besides, things are going famously. I'm sure you'll be able to come down to dinner and perhaps hear that everything has turned out all right. Now, excuse me. Baxter will call you in plenty of time, and if you need help to dress, why, I'll be your valet!"

"You're wanted on the telephone, Mr. Carver," said Baxter as he returned to the lower floor.

"Thanks! Life is just one phone call after another to-day."

Inspector Lacey was speaking.

"Your hunch about those prints is O. K.," said the ranking officer of the detective bureau. "Say, what'll we do with this guy Alley? He's yellin' his head off, threatening a suit and a lot of stuff?"

"Let me talk to him," said Carver. "Then I'll talk with you afterward."

"Here he is," said the man at the other end of the wire.

"Mr. Alley," began Carver, "I must confess I'm a bonehead. I saw your cab this morning, but I didn't know it was yours. You see, I've never met you, but Miss Morse told me this morning of how friendly you had been with her and her mother. Mrs. Morse also spoke of you in high terms. I explained to them how the mistake occurred—the arrest and detention, I mean—and invited them out to dinner. They accepted the invitation. In fact, they're here now. Won't you join us?"

Divers and sundry vituperations cluttered the wire. Carver listened to them unmoved.

"Why didn't you turn me out when you did the women?" asked Alley finally.

"Well, it's this way, from what I gather: The boys at headquarters had an idea you were somebody important, and they wanted to look over the fingerprints. That's a habit they have, you know, when a man is suspected of murder."

"Murder!"

"You heard me the first time, Mr. Alley,"

said Carver in a brittle tone. "When a boy like Freddy Graham is struck down——"

"Is he dead?" gasped the other man.

"How should I know? His body disappeared."

"Well, I didn't take it."

"That's correct. Besides, Mrs. and Miss Morse made it clear to me—about you, I mean. That's why I'm going to ask Inspector Lacey to turn you loose. Put him on the wire, please."

Carver made a pretence of hanging up the hook after he had finished. But his quick ear heard the "click" of the extension somewhere else in the house, and he nodded at the transmitter repeatedly. He rose and smiled.

"Very good, Eddie," he muttered. "Alley's not such a fool as not to know that his fingerprints are there. But since he got off the other time, and he thinks I've nothing on him—well, he'll run a few rings around himself to-night. So Baxter was listening in, eh? Well, he must have sobered up again."

"Mr. Casey has returned, sir." Baxter's precise accents fell faultlessly from the library door.

"Thank you," said Carver. "Is he at the garage?"

"Yes, sir. He seems to want to get in, sir. The door seems to be locked."

Carver went to the garage, met Casey and held a short conference with him.

"You said you wanted to know the third race at Belmont. Here she is." The chauffeur assistant produced a newspaper. "Bunko wins—at a hundred to one. Did you have a bet on that dog?"

"Well — er — no — that is, not at the track!" admitted Carver as he drew the key out of his pocket and remarked: "Lay low, but pipe off this bird and tell me if you know him when I've finished with him."

Then he stepped inside.

The handcuffed chauffeur of the yellow taxicab was walking up and down like a caged panther—three steps to the right and three to the left invariably. He turned a sullen gaze upon his captor, but never slackened that short stride. There was plenty of room for more steps, but he did not take them.

"I'm going to make this short," said Carver grimly. "I've got you, and got you right—carrying a pistol. If it's your first offence, or if you've never been convicted before, then it's a misdemeanor. But you're in Westchester County now, and if I phone the sheriff you'll lay a few days, anyway, in the prettiest pogie in the State. Also, your New York pull won't work here. Now, I want to ask you a question. If you come clean out you go."

"Shoot it!" said the flat-faced man without stopping his stride.

"You drove Mr. Alley and the ladies out here this morning. You waited for them at the far end of the mill by the side of the road. Then Alley drove down the road a piece and phoned to the Belmont track. He left orders for Bunko to race and to win to-day, didn't he? And Bunko won. Here's the hop!"

Carver unfolded the paper.

"What's the question?"

"Did Alley leave that machine while it waited at the end of the mill, and if so, how long was he gone?"

"You c'n search me," said the chauffeur. "I was curled up asleep. I'd been out all night 'on the yellows' tryin' to make a livin'. Regardin' that gat, do you think I'd risk being gyped outa twelve or eighteen hours' pick-ups from fares and tips? That's why I carry a gat!"

"I wouldn't any more if I were you," said Carver. "For any man with the prison-cell step, like you have it, must have done a long stretch somewhere some time. Well, you're only a material witness, and since they've turned Mr. Alley loose in New York, I'm going to take a chance and turn you loose up here."

He unlocked the handcuffs from the astonished man's hands.

"Here's ten iron men," continued Carver, tendering a bill for ten dollars. "You wouldn't have earned much more if you'd been loose. Now, let's go down and have a look at the clock on your cab. The ladies didn't pay you, did they?"

"No, sir."

They walked down to the road. Carver paid the metre charge of $8.75 with another ten-dollar note and told the driver to "keep the change." The cab whirled away.

Clutch Casey's head popped out of a near-by hedge.

"Malted mackerel!" he gasped. "Do you know who you're t'rowin' yer money away on? Why, that was——"

"Jimmie, the Squirrel," laughed Carver. "Yep, I mugged him, but I wanted to be sure. His face has been downtown for ten years. He's the kind that cracks the hard nuts, or did, for the old Tin Dipper gang over on Tenth avenue, where you used to be a patrolman. Never mind, Clutch. Now, we're going in to dinner in about an hour. And here's your stuff while we eat."

He gave a few low-voiced instructions, ending with: "Be sure Baxter gets his lamps on that front page with Bunko winning at a hundred to one."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MR. ALLEY ARRIVES

"LAY covers for six, Baxter," directed Carver as he went to his room, carrying a bag, to dress. "Mrs. Morse will sit at the foot of the table, her daughter and myself on one side, and nearest the window put a plate for Frederick and one for Mr. Alley, who may join us."

"Very good, sir. And flowers?"

"All orchids," smiled Carver dreamily as he started up the stairs.

The detective enjoyed his bath, for he was rather "fagged" after the terrific mental ordeal he had encountered. But he was "to the manor born" in every faultless line of his evening clothes when he received Mrs. Fairfax and her daughter, after Frederick's father had been first seated, and escorted them to the dining-room.

"Permit me, Mr. Graham, to present Mrs. Lemuel Fairfax, widow of the late Colonel Fairfax, of Louisville, and her daughter Irene. Miss Irene, for purely professional reasons, uses the name of Morse. She is the star of 'All Orchids,' a very popular play now running in New York, and she attained that position because of a four-dimensioned voice!"

The banker rose slightly and bowed formally.

"I—I have not been quite myself, ladies, since my son met with an accident this morning," said he. "But you are most welcome, I assure you. Mr. Carver tells me that you are both highly connected in the South and that you have met my son."

"I took a strong fancy to Frederick," said Mrs. Fairfax, "at our first meeting, and ere I knew he was your son. He invariably sends a bouquet of orchids to my daughter, which she wears each night in her part, you know. But that's a secret, of course."

"Of course," assented Mr. Graham. "I'm very sorry that my son cannot be here to meet you as he had planned."

"Oh, Freddy'll turn up in a few days," said Carver just as Baxter began serving the first course. "He went through the war, you know, and came out without a scratch. I'll wager he isn't so very far away!"

"Were you expecting other guests?" asked Mrs. Fairfax after a moment's pause.

"I asked Mr. Alley to run out and dine with us," interpolated Carver casually, "to atone for that mistake in New York. He seemed a bit peevish, even though I explained how it occurred. I am not sure he'll come, but I rather hope he will." He turned to Mr. Graham. "Mr. Alley was once a trainer for Colonel Fairfax's famous stable. He still follows 'the sport of kings,' I believe."

"A banker," said Mr. Graham, with a forced smile, "isn't supposed to know so much about racing. But I've heard Mr. Lane speak of it. He's an enthusiast."

"You should see it in the South," said Mrs. Fairfax. "My daughter and I were always on hand when the colonel's stable had entries. Why, we finished second one year in the Kentucky derby!"

"Ah, indeed," murmured Mr. Graham in much the same tone as if derbies vied with fedoras in contests between thoroughbreds.

"Isn't it a bit close here?" queried Carver.

"Baxter, would you mind opening one of those French windows? Thank you!"

"They've named a track after a rich horse owner, I understand," said Mr. Graham casually.

"Yes," said Carver, "and that reminds me. Somebody put over a big killing at the track to-day. A horse named Bunko, my chauffeur says, won the second race at the odds of 100 to 1."

"Did you hear that, Irene?" Mrs. Fairfax's face glowed. "Mr. Alley had such faith in dear old Bunko! He lost yesterday. But I left a small wager to place on him this morning!"

Baxter paused to beam on the assemblage. Then he waddled away with the dishes and returned with the next course.

"Bunko was one of the colonel's horses, was he not?" queried Carver.

"Oh, yes. I used to ride him when he was a colt, and I was only ten at the time," said Irene. "He was very gentle and very speedy."

"Well," said Mr. Graham pensively, "I have no objections to racing, in and of itself. But I'm glad to say that my son Frederick prefers air-racing to any other kind. At least I judged as much when he talked with me last night on the telephone. 'Great sport, dad,' were his exact words."

The door-bell pealed. The unexpected resonance rang ominously through the room. Irene Fairfax grew a shade whiter.

Carver, however, turned nonchalantly, remarking:

"That may be Mr. Alley, Baxter. If it is, tell him we've laid a cover for him, and show him in at once. Miss Morse must be at the theatre at 8:15 for the curtain, and in costume. It's just 6:15 by my watch now."

Baxter hurried to the door.

He came back more slowly, and in a most undignified posture for a respectable butler, holding both hands high above his head.

Behind him walked Franklyn A. Alley and behind the "benefactor" of the two ladies present walked "Jimmie, the Squirrel."

Both visitors, moreover, carried "gats" in plain view.

CHAPTER TWELVE

"ON THE YELLOWS" AT LAST

"AH! Good-evening, Mr. Alley!" greeted Carver. "Why the display of armed force? This isn't Tenth avenue, you know, and, barring your friend, there isn't a Tin Dipper gangster present!"

"Shut up!" savagely returned the man wearing the tortoise-shell glasses.

"On the contrary, I'm entirely too loquacious to remain silent, I assure you," laughed the detective. "Alley, you shouldn't take things so seriously. I never—or rarely ever—wear a pistol in evening dress. It's bad form, you know. Besides, you don't think that your display of weapons is to be taken seriously, do you? With all your shady reputation you've never been anything but a white-livered coward at heart, for all blackmailers are cowards, aren't they, now?"

Alley's swarthy countenance blanched. His features contorted in horrid rage.

"I ought to drill you through—right here!" he hissed.

"I wouldn't, before so many witnesses," said Carver coolly. "Especially since there's no necessity for murder at all. You came out here to learn something, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did," grated Alley. "And if you have anything to say, you'd better say it quick."

"Then let poor old Baxter put his hands down and also let him sit down, for one thing. He's had a hard day. As for Jimmie, the Squirrel, why, he's as welcome as the orchids Freddy Graham used to send to Miss Irene. Sorry, Jimmie, that you didn't take my advice about 'gats.' Awful sorry.

"Now, are you ready for a little story? It began last night with a falling collar-button, and it is closing the final chapter just now. You thought, Alley, that you'd outguessed me about those fingerprints of yours at headquarters. And you were right—dead right—until I turned Jimmy loose and mentioned your name to him. That got under your hide, didn't it? And so you pranced right out here and into my trap!"

"If I'm trapped," growled Alley, "you're in a coffin!"

"Well, we'll see. Meanwhile both you and Baxter just have a look at this, and then both of you do a little hard thinking."

He spread out a piece of pink paper bearing the legend stamped across its face: "Twenty-five thousand dollars—certified." Below was the signature, "Frederick Graham."

"Why, bless my soul!" cried the banker. "That's the check that my son had certified yesterday at my bank."

"Exactly," laughed Carver, tossing it to him. "Therefore, Mr. Alley loses again. Your bank would never cash it for him, nor would any other bank. Nor dare he ask Jimmie, the Squirrel, to murder any one here to get it cashed. Baxter, this check stuff is tough on you, too, isn't it?"

The butler grew pallid.

Carver rose and bowed low to the ladies.

"Listen to the short and simple tale of a poor Harvard graduate. Almost as good as a shilling shocker, I assure you. Mr. Alley here, or, as he is sometimes known in the East and at police headquarters, Mr. Betts, was the trainer of the Fairfax stable. You had a brother, Miss Irene, Cecil Fairfax—and as fine a lad as ever stood in shoes."

"How do you know?" Her eager cry rang out bell-like in clearness, but fraught with unspeakable sister-love. Mrs. Fairfax sobbed eagerly as her dim eyes fairly glued themselves to the detective's face.

"How do I know?" said Carver gently. "Well, that's simple. Cecil was taken one night by Alley, alias Betts, during the racing season at a Long Island track in 1916, to a gambling house. He overplayed his hand, or thought he did. Really, he was a victim of a clever gang of card sharps. But he didn't know that. He only knew that a Fairfax must keep his word, if it concerned a gambling debt or any other debt. And he owed fifty thousand dollars, or thought he did, which was the same thing!

"That was when Alley went to you women. Oh, I know it, just as well as I know that his crooked cane-handle dealt that foul blow to Freddy Graham, over in the pasture yonder, this morning. I know it, because Cecil died in France—he was in my company—and he told me the story as he knew it."

"I knew this man Betts, or Alley, because he was in the line-up at police headquarters one day in 1916, after a raid on the same gambling house. Mr. Casey, my aid, was one of the arresting officers. But Mr. Alley failed to remember my face, while I remembered his over in France, because I wore a mask, as all headquarters detectives did at that time.

"Alley slipped out of the police net, and we only knew him as Betts. But in France, when Cecil described him to me one night in the Argonne, I remembered the chap by his nose. And I told Cecil that he had been duped. I told him also that I would some day endeavor to trace his family. But that was the next day, and Cecil died from his wound that same night. Then I forgot Betts completely, even to-day. It was Casey, my assistant, who remembered, and he told me after Alley had left."

He paused and glanced sternly at Alley, still fumbling with his gun.

"You poor, deluded simp! Do I look like a man that would back down in front of your pistol when the eyes of the mother and sister of that dead boy, whom you've been blackmailing for the past four years, are on me?"

He launched himself at Alley with a ferocious leap.

Jimmie, the Squirrel, chattering and chirruping like his animal prototype, backed toward the curtains, peering this way and that, his trigger finger quivering as the two men rolled to the floor, watching a chance to shoot the detective without injuring Alley.

Then occurred another odd thing.

The pistol suddenly leaped from the gangster's hand. From behind the curtains a short but effective bludgeon descended twice on his head. Jimmie rolled to the floor without a sound and Clutch Casey stepped out.

Carver, having handcuffed Alley, kicked him contemptuously one side. "I knew you

wouldn't shoot," he sneered, "for a blackmailer hasn't the sand to shoot!"

Baxter started to rise.

"Sit down," the detective told him. "I'm not quite through, but nearly so."

He narrated the incident of the collar-button, the word "bunko" and his futile pursuit of the yellow taxicab near the Hotel Bavaria the night before.

"This morning," said he, "when Freddy landed, Alley tried to induce Fred to give him money. Freddy refused, just as he had refused to bet on Bunko yesterday, because Alley had thought Freddy a boob. Bunko lost yesterday, remember. Alley was in straitened circumstances. In his sudden anger he swung at Freddy with his cane."

"You can't prove it!" snarled the man on the floor.

"Not by Jimmie, the Squirrel, for he was asleep when you left the cab. But I can prove it by Freddy. And here Brother Baxter enters the story."

He shot a remorseless glance toward the cowering butler.

"Baxter overheard Mr. Graham telephone last night that Freddy had a certified check for $25,000 on his person. Baxter came around one corner of the mill—at least I think he did, and am willing to give him the benefit of a charitable doubt—just after Alley had struck down Frederick and slunk, unseen, around the other corner of it.

"Baxter remembered the check after I went to the house, carrying Miss Irene. So he carried Freddy to the side of the old mill, just back of the wheel-pit, and thrust him down into a cistern there—built many years ago to get soft water from the roof, and long since forgotten. The stone slab on it hadn't been raised in years.

"The water there, although not deep, helped revive Freddy. He tried to get out, but could not raise the stone. I heard him, and took Doctor Phelps down to take him to Roosevelt Hospital after I helped him out and had a long talk with him. Freddy will be home in a day or two.

"I thought Baxter's unconsciousness was genuine. I gave him brandy and forgot the bottle. Baxter swigged half of it. He called on the phone to put a bet on Bunko and kindly mentioned the Alley stable. He was so drunk he didn't know I took his blood-stained handkerchief, but if Freddy had drowned in that cistern I would have sent him to the electric chair on that evidence alone."

"But why should Baxter have put my son's body in that forgotten cistern?" demanded Mr. Graham. "He was never contaminated by this other rogue, was he?"

"Not that I know of," replied Carver. "But Baxter, you see, like Alley, was hard up, for he, too, 'follows the ponies.' He probably thought Freddy was surely dying, if not dead, and he wanted time to go through Freddy's clothes to get that $25,000 check. He missed out there. I found the check in Freddy's aviator coat, that he had folded up and put under the seat, when I inspected things in general this forenoon."

"Oh, why," wailed Mrs. Fairfax, "didn't you look us up before? Irene and I have had so much trouble trying to meet the demands of the man that ruined my poor boy!"

"I divined that, and mentioned it this afternoon, did I not?" said Carver. "I did send a letter to the colonel when I got back from France. It was returned marked: 'Addressee deceased.' I wrote again to the police there and learned you'd come to New York. But in this city you used the name of Morse, remember! Not until this forenoon did I learn your name and former residence. Then I had to meet Mr. Graham, and afterward I was pretty busy hunting some trace of Freddy."

The unmistakable clang of a patrol wagon gong rippled in from the roadway.

Carver smiled satirically.

"Clutch Casey's a fast worker. That's probably Chief Philip Gargan and some of his men from Pelham in their new patrol wagon. It's a brilliant yellow. I'll say they've made good time, too, for they're almost two miles from here."

He walked over to the still prostrate gangster and shook him.

"Wake up, Jimmie. You're 'on the yellows' again!"

The Mate of "The Moose"

By NEIL McCONLOGUE

CHAPTER ONE

THE brisk, bustling business of living had reached neaptide; the day had dropped to its lowest ebb and was being pushed over the rim of time by that swarthy visitor we call Night.

"Gutterside," that medley of many tongues, voices, dialects and nationalities, accepted twilight and mysterious night that wound its dusky veil about the district, passionately pressing the poverty sector to its shadowy breast.

Shades, hanging in the windows where they could be afforded or where their use was courted, were drawn against the eyes of the curious, and the evening lamp was lighted. Once again Night rocked "Gutterside" in its ample arms, comforting the district's population, resting them against the rigors of the day to follow.

It was no doubt at such a time that another enigma had been born.

The moon, hanging in the heavenly canopy like a giant orange, looked down upon the elevated structure, through its heavy trellis work, and saw a pasty face peer over the top step that led down to and up from the locksmith shop, the store of queerly twisted and well-turned bolts and bars, owned and operated by Riley King.

The man's cap, overflowing all around, drooping at the sides and back and rolling part way down the visor that shielded the wearer's eyes, was tawny-colored. The head turned cautiously toward the right and then to the left, after which the man came up from his vantage-ground and the next moment scurried toward the Bowery.

Night held sway. The man slipped in and out of the less illuminated side of the street. The city nodded on.

Below the sidewalk level one of the city's popular citizens, prominently before the public eye until his age urged him to rest, lay facing the cobwebs that swayed from the ceiling of Old Man King's shop. It lay and stared for hours.

Dawn cracked. Darkness was suddenly swept aside by the rays of the sun-god, who sprayed itself across the horizon, scattering its celestial relation to the four winds and trampling upon its own shadows.

Down from its skyway orbit the sun peered into the upturned mouth of a little mongrel dog, known to the urchins of the street, push-cart pedlers and the corner policemen as "Boots."

What an appropriate name for a cobbler's dog—"Boots!"

"Boots" and Riley King had been clandestine lovers. They had to be secretive about their many rendezvous, for the cobbler was not friendly toward the old locksmith. Boots thoroughly understood both men.

Ordinarily a tail-wagger, usually ready to romp playfully, this bright morning found the dog with his head held toward the heavens, and howl after howl came with blood-chilly regularity. Across the street, through the spacious window of the Marble Lunch, the clock gave the hour as eight. Ordinarily, at this hour Riley King had redusted and adjusted his array of bent and twisted catches, clasps and bars and bolts, and turned to his ill-lighted corner to commune with his friend Boots, his musty volumes, and partake of the daily communion of philosophy.

CHAPTER TWO

AT ten o'clock the same day the new, bald-headed editor of *The Sentinel* turned to his star news-sharp.

"Race over to 'Gutterside,' Kirk; see Madden and cover the death of Paddy Ryan, one-time police inspector, terror of the Tenderloin."

Dropping his typewriter into the bowels of his office desk, about to scamper off on his assignment, the editor stopped the reporter.

"Better drop into the 'morgue'; take some old clippings touching upon Ryan's activity while connected with the police department, so that you can talk up the case to Lew Madden," directed the editorial head.

A moment later, one hand gripping clippings of various lengths, the reporter left the newspaper office and caught a passing taxi, at the same time tossing word to the driver:

"'Gutterside' police headquarters!"

The first clipping was very helpful:

"Patrick Ryan was appointed to police department through the Delaware Hall influences. On the force but a short time, he was appointed roundsman in '88, a captain in '95 and an inspector of police in '98.

"March of the following year he was placed in command of the Central Inspection District, which at the time included the old Tenderloin border; but while the man was a strict disciplinarian and conscientious almost to a fault, he was unable to suppress gambling and disorderly houses.

"Shortly after District Attorney Gregg began his activities against Tenderloin gamblers, in '03, Inspector Ryan voluntarily retired on a half-pay pension.

"The man's achievement, his first and admittedly foremost, while inspector, was the taming of 'The Moose,' Dave Martell.

"Martell, long an underworld leader, bowed out of the slums soon after Inspector Ryan's entrance. Like the ruminant after which the underworld named him, Martell was every inch the Moose. He was all snout, head and shoulders. His disordered, dark-brown hair, heavy and fibre-like, was not unlike that of the deer, and it seemed to grow the thickest on the crook's neck and shoulders. He was never known to travel with the herd, one of the things that set him apart from moose-ishness; another unmoose-like trait was Martell's eyes; they never softened sufficiently to call upon the lachrymal tear duct."

The reporter looked up from the interesting news-clipping as the taxi-driver rapped upon the closed window behind him.

"'Gutterside' station-house, mister!"

After paying the driver the man pocketed his limber clips and entered the police building.

Lew Madden was at his desk when the reporter walked in.

"'Lo, Chief," came the quilldriver's nonchalant greeting.

"Morning," replied Madden, at the same time spearing his potato penholder with the heavy harpoon he resorted to when writing his unreadable scrawl.

On the Chief's desk a little tan-tinted motto caught the reporter's attention. The news-writer read the pithy, guiding principle the second time:

"Even a fish won't get caught—if it keeps its mouth shut!"

"Giving the thugs a lesson, a bit of advice, by flying that little adage, Chief?"

Comment on the little excerpt of philosophy brought the detective's broad smile.

"Not giving any lessons; just wig-wagging a little truth, say, for the benefit of my own crowd of law guardians."

"Anything new?"

"The Ryan mystery," abstractedly countered Madden.

"Just what I came to talk about."

"I guessed as much. What's on your mind? I have fifteen minutes, then I'm off," assured the official.

"First: Why do you refer to Ryan's death as a mystery?"

"Because it has all the earmarks of cabalistic purpose, for one reason; then there is the handwriting on the note that savors of something else—suicide!"

"Does sound kinda intriguing; also smacks of other things, doesn't it?" The speaker made a notation of the margin of his newspaper.

"Just what data have you, Lew?" pryed the writer.

"This morning Gillen stooped over to stroke a puppy that belongs to an Italian cobbler. Usually, so Gillen says, the dog is full of pep and playful, but this morning he just sat and howled into the air. Thinking that an old locksmith, who sort 'a' chummed with the dog, had forgotten the pup's morning fare, Officer Gillen stepped down the few steps and tried the door. Knowing the proprietor's ways, familiar with the fact that the shop was customarily open at an earlier hour, the copper rattled the door, but got no response. The little dog, at Gillen's heels, proceeded with its howling; the policeman squinted through the door window and saw the leg of a man sticking out from under the farthest end of the counter.

"When I arrived Gillen was outside of the place. We looked the store over carefully. Found a gun, one chamber discharged—a hole in the dead man's left breast, slightly above the heart, but there were no powder marks on the clothing. That, as you know, usually goes hand in hand with self-destruction when a pistol winds up the span of a life—self-extermination.

"On the top of Old Man King's wobbly desk I found this note." The detective handed the reported a slip of paper.

The wording was in long-hand and the message short. "I shall be down to-morrow to end it all in your place." The message was addressed to Riley King, the locksmith, who was considered a dear friend of the dead inspector's, and the handwriting has unquestionably proven to be that of Ex-Inspector Ryan.

"How does it look to you?" The sleuth's words only prompted the reporter to reread the apparently hastily written note.

CHAPTER THREE

DURING the three weeks that followed the finding of Paddy Ryan's lifeless body the department that he had previously been an active member of furthered every effort to apprehend the person or persons who might be guilty of the murder, or who could throw some weighty light upon why the man had committed suicide, if he had disposed of himself.

Detectives, with well-honed orbs and a reputation for recalling faces that had passed under their gaze in the "line-up room" at headquarters, were stationed at the most logical points in the railroad terminals. Underworld informers were plied with threats and promises, petted and publicly ranted at for their earlier acknowledgment and present lack of the movements in the sub-society.

The known killers in every sector of the city were nabbed, later to prove an alibi as to their whereabouts on the night of the late inspector's death or drop a remark that was minutely sifted while the gangster was held in headquarters.

Days passed into the first week, and not a worth-while clue developed. The dead man had been well-fixed financially. He was in good health and spirits when he left the family with whom he lived. His only living relative, a brother, living in Maine, was expecting the retired official to spend a vacation in the north woods.

The second week following the discovery, during which time Riley King had failed to appear, a situation appeared which naturally compounded the already oppressing case; word got into the press of the city that the bullet found in Ryan's body was of a different calibre than was thrown from the gun found near the body of the man.

This stimulated another printing of enlarged snapshots of the old locksmith, found among his effects, and the baiting of the already five hundred dollars' reward for the apprehension and conviction of Riley King.

On the sixteenth day the old locksmith shambled down to his drab, musty-choked shop; after unlocking the door, and before observing the disorder of the place, he turned to whistle for his friend "Boots," when a plain-clothesman arrested him.

Riley King broke down at headquarters upon learning of the death of his friend. In a few words he admitted receiving the

note which he assured the police was written and sent to him by Paddy Ryan.

"You see," thoughtfully, frankly reassured the old man, "Pat and I had been up against a question that lines up with what we were both interested in—philosophy, general laws that furnish any further rational explanation of most anything—and the note merely meant that Pat would be down to mouth over the problem. However, I received a message from one of the professors who teaches my grandchild in Vermont at a boarding-school; the youngster was seriously ill, calling for me, so I hastened away."

Regardless of the aparent sincerity of the old fellow's words and explanation, he was held for investigation and released when the professor corroborated the visit to the grandchild.

"I'll boost the reward for the arrest and conviction of the murderer, and it was murder, to the extent of another hundred," Riley King announced. Tear-filled eyes told the depth of love he had for the dead man. An officer helped him back to his basement establishment.

The kidnapping of a society belle apparently eradicated the Paddy Ryan case.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE depth of Oriental friendship assumes the nature of idolatry at times. And since Lew Madden cleared up the Ming Gow mystery, the Chinaman accused, Bow Sing, had been his serf. Acquitted of the murder of Ming Gow, Bow Sing broke from Chinatown, took service with the ultra-exclusive Longworths, and shortly became sort of major-domo over the other Chinese help.

Bow Sing's only visits downtown were made to Lew Madden's sanctum. There the two traded the detective's clear-cut English for the Chinaman's pidgin-English.

It was only fitting that the detective should pay his respects to Bow, who was recuperating following an operation.

St. Katheryn's Hospital was quite off the beaten track of the Manhattanites. It poured down its reflections from the sun to the restless waters of the Hudson.

"Bow Sing is the name, sister," smiled Madden.

The nun returned an indulgent expression, consulted a large filing cabinet, and led the way down the quiet, highly polished hallway.

An open door wooed the detective's glance. It started as an idle, impulsive act, but ended in a complete stop and studied glare.

In the room a patient, a man, was sleeping. The sleeper had emitted a long-drawn sigh, which was really the cause prompting Madden's passing look. The dark face contracted with pain; the officer stepped closer to the open door and peered more carefully.

Wan rays of a fading sun fell upon the face of the ailing man—a visage that not all the glory of a full day could have brightened. It was dark, great of nose, and awry of heavy brown hair.

The click of the Sister's beads, dangling at her side, as she retraced her steps to Madden's much taller figure, did not start the officer.

"This is not Mr. Sing's room, sir," she politely said.

The words were whispered. As the nun spoke she looked understandingly upon the sleeping sufferer; then her gaze cleared the window-sill and slipped across the adjacent building to the rosy drift clouds and the flight of birds that made passing black specks against the face of the sun.

In Madden's face the nun saw a studied expression, as one trying to find an answer, as deep, nervous breathing came from the sick room. The Chief's gaze seemed to implore hope out of darkness. There was no sympathy radiating in Madden's scrutiny.

"The face is hazily familiar, sister," returned Madden. "Could you tell me, offhand, his name?"

"A Mister Martell, I believe," answered the nun. "The poor man was injured—in the woods." The last three words came after a slight, thoughtful pause. "Or perhaps it was on one of the rifle ranges across

the river. Yes, I believe it was on one of the ranges; it would be absurd to come all the way from the hunting lodge for treatment, wouldn't it?"

Madden nodded.

"He has been dangerously ill."

"How long?" interrupted the officer.

"About three weeks, I believe, but he seems to be responding to treatment now."

The detective looked once more at the sunken eyes, the set, heavy-lipped, all-nose countenance, such as one would never forget once seen, and with a final examination of the deep lines that crossed and recrossed the ashen-dark cheeks, the still darker hands that lay listlessly upon the rise and fall of the sleeper's chest, Madden followed the Sister down the hallway and to Bow Sing's private room.

CHAPTER FIVE

KENNETH BARROWS awaited Madden's return.

"Nice host you are," the young man remarked, feigning reproof.

"Well! I'll be blessed! Who ever expected you, Kenny," said the officer, stepping over to the man who had apparently taken possession of the Chief's desk and afternoon edition of *The Argus*. "Bring your wife along?"

"Nope. Just run in to try for a trade on the old, gasping peanut-roaster we call an automobile; that prescribes too much thrashing around for my wife. Say! Who do you think I saw up at the Starlight Pictures' Studio?"

"Starlight himself," good-naturedly joked Madden.

"Nothing like it. Remember that bird that we used to call 'The Moose'? His name was Dave Martell. Well, I saw his one-time pal. Remember Slim Sherwood? They called him 'The Mate' because he chumed with Martell, I guess."

"What's he doing?" asked the chief.

"Parts, they call it."

"Parts of what?" questioned Madden.

"Playing parts for the Starlight Pictures. He's good, too. You ought to run up and look him over. He's a pretty decent fellow. Been shooting square, no doubt; at least he hasn't been connected or mentioned in any crimes, so far as I know, since he quit The Moose."

"What parted The Mate and The Moose, Kenny? Do you know?"

"Yes," answered the younger of the two friends. "The Moose was jealous of the young fellow's wife and framed it up so she'd be found in 'Mollbuzzer' Moe Miller's apartment; The Moose was always afraid of any 'racket' that a woman knew anything about. And he thought he'd rather frame The Mate's wife, and bring about a permanent break in their relations, than talk the matter over. The Mate incidentally thought that Martell was about the squarest bird that ever drew a 'rod,' and when he learned of the frame-up he not only quit Martell, but he got out of the game entirely. They say he went gunning for The Moose, but the thing died a natural death. Then Sherwood got hanging around with actors; finally his wife got a connection with the flicker people and Slim Sherwood blossomed out as a character man."

"I saw The Moose to-day myself," put in Madden.

"Still living by his wits?" asked Barrows.

"Barely living, I'd say," answered the officer.

A peculiar twinkle beamed from the detective's deep-set eyes. He drew a small notebook from his upper left vest-pocket and jotted something at the top of a clear page.

"If you want anything hard enough you'll get it generally—if you only keep trying." The words slipped, rather they stole, from Madden's lips. The conviction was unintentionally uttered.

CHAPTER SIX

DURING the three days that followed Kenneth Barrow's visit and talk with Lew Madden the Chief had been very busy. As a result of his trip to the Starlight Pic-

tures' Studio and conversation with the one-time Slim Sherwood, now just plain Anthony Sherwood, Madden planned a little party for The Moose.

"And so," Madden was saying, while The Moose lay on the flat of his back, the soles of his feet opposing the doorway, "you were shot over on the Jersey Club's rifle range?"

The Moose mumbled an affirmative "yes."

"What were they shooting with?" continued the detective.

"Rifles. What did you think—putty-blowers?" sarcastically thwarted The Moose.

"But the slug the doctors cut out of the shoulder-blade—out of your shoulder-blade—was never fired from a rifle."

"Probably somebody threw it at me," sneered the sick man.

"You don't seem to brighten up much, Martell, when I am trying to get a line on who it was that shot you."

A footstep in the doorway drew the attention of Madden and The Moose.

The figure was that of a rosy-cheeked old man. Frosted side-locks, tinted with an earlier-day walnut-bronze coloring, curled from beneath an ancient, fast-greening hat. The head bobbed with the jerky movements, perhaps forerunner of the final call of long-threatening palsy.

For a moment the visitor paused in the doorway, as though undecided whether to enter or pass on. Then a bony hand was pointed at the sick man and a cracked, tremulous accusation came from the quivering lips: "I told you not to run, Martell; I told you not to run."

Mumbling incoherently to himself, the caller turned and, without further word, shuffled down the hospital hallway.

As the man disappeared the startled sick man gasped, "Ryan," and the man's vibration rocked his bed.

"Thought you killed him, eh, Martell?" sneered Madden.

For a moment the criminal stared through the entrance and the detective studied his prisoner.

"Now that it's not as bad a job as you left it to be, Dave," encouraged the sleuth, "you can help yourself by clearing up a little matter that has been the only obstacle in our way. Why did you take a shot at old man Ryan? He never did you any harm, did he?"

"No—no, he didn't do nothing to me, Chief. I didn't mean to hurt him—didn't think I'd have to. I met Old Man King as he was on his way to the station to take a train to see somebody that was sick. I knew where King kept his dough and, thinking it was easy money, the old guy being away, I crushed the joint."

For a short spell the speaker paused, drew a few deep breaths and continued:

"Paddy walked into the place; I didn't hear him till he slammed the door. And he sees me. He reaches for his 'gat' and I beat him to it. He didn't pay no mind to me havin' a 'gat,' and I didn't want to pour it into him. I had reached the door after circling around the counter, when Paddy says: 'Don't run or I'll shoot.' But I'm glad I didn't bump him off, Chief. I'm glad he is all right."

The Sister, who first spoke to Madden about The Moose, was standing near by, having entered unheard; she listened as the detective had the sick man repeat his statement, "I'm glad I didn't bump him off, Chief." And to verify the evidence in The Moose's statement the chief asked:

"How many shots did you fire at Ryan, Martell? One, I suppose; you can usually knock them over with the first shot."

The flattery hit the mark.

"Yes—just one shot, Chief; I generally get 'em with the first."

The Chief arose and walked down the hallway with the nun.

"That young man Mr. Barrows brought here from the Starlight studio is a wonderful character artist, Mister Madden; one would hardly believe he could make up his face to look so much like the photograph of Paddy Ryan which you gave him. Why, he even deceived the patient Martell!" eagerly assured the Sister.

"I wanted to fool that wounded crook in order to get an admission from him that he had murdered Paddy Ryan," said Madden grimly, "and I was glad you entered just in

time to hear him reiterate a statement that will shortly spell his end. In plain English, I've got a witness of his confession, and you are the witness."

The detective then found the reformed crook, who had become a motion picture actor, waiting outside.

"How did you happen to say just the words that Paddy Ryan evidently said to The Moose when they faced each other with guns, Sherwood?" beamed Madden.

The young character acter, removing traces of the make-up he had worn, walked up to Madden and whispered:

"Experience, Chief; that's what they use to holler at me in the old days. That, apparently, is what Paddy Ryan said to The Moose before he plugged him."

CONVICTED BY A THUMB MARK

CASES in which a man has been convicted on purely circumstantial evidence are of frequent occurrence, but in the majority of instances it would not be difficult to point to at least one weak link in the chain of guilt. Though numbers of innocent persons have in this way suffered punishment, here is a striking case in which a criminal was found guilty on testimony that left no room for even the shadow of a doubt.

One night an assassin entered a drover's house in Ohio, killed the inmates, and secured a sealed package containing eighteen hundred dollars in banknotes. In order to conceal his crime he set fire to the house before leaving it. The building burned slowly, and the neighbors were able to extinguish the flames and to discover the murderous work which had been done.

The assassin, before leaping over the fence, had torn open the wrapper of the package and flung it on the ground. This was picked up by the police, and marks of blood were found upon it. It was the only clue in their possession.

After twenty-four hours the murderer returned to the town. The police suspected him because he had been mysteriously absent, and was known to have been intimate with the drover. They did not arrest him, but constantly watched him for four months.

He had been poor, but now seemed to have money. In the course of a week he married, and went away on a wedding tour. Two detectives followed him. Whenever he paid a hotel bill, or offered money for any purpose, they secured the banknotes which had been in his possession.

Subsequently he made several journeys with the detectives behind him, and finally went to Minnesota. There he paid out a twenty-dollar bill with a red thumb mark on one corner. The police arrested him as soon as they examined it.

On the trial the torn wrapper with its blood mark was identified as having been in the drover's possession. The banknotes, which had been traced to the assassin, were put in it with the last one paid out by him on top.

The smear of blood on the wrapper corresponded precisely with the marks on the banknotes underneath. The specialist's magnifying-glass revealed unerringly how the murderer's thumb, in tearing open the envelope, had touched the first banknote. It was circumstantial evidence conclusive of guilt. The murderer was convicted and hanged.

The police understood their business. They had their theory in relation to the crime, but they had no evidence upon which to secure a conviction. They had their torn wrapper, and were confident that the banknote which had been directly underneath would have a corresponding smear of blood. They allowed the assassin to go where he liked, and waited patiently for him to convict himself. In the end they secured evidence establishing his guilt with certainty.

Circumstantial evidence can be as conclusive as direct proof, and it is sometimes more trustworthy, because there is less chance for perjury or conspiracy.

The Tiger-Eye Emerald

By HUGH THOMASON

THE day had been oppressively hot, even as days are reckoned in Calcutta.

At noon the city had been an open furnace; toward evening the wind, veering, had brought the hot, unsavory breath of the southland deserts. And night had fallen fetid, intolerable, jeweled with a blood-red moon that seemed to reflect the day-long heat of the city it swung above.

In his room at the Hotel Empire Captain Morehead, as he called himself, smoked a native cheroot in a chair by the window that looked down into the shadowy spaces of a garden below.

Accustomed as he was to the tropic warmth of the flamboyant East, the stifling and stirless air of Calcutta engendered no particular discomfort or annoyance. He bore it with the indifference of a Pathan or yellow Saddhu. His silk shirt was scarcely moist with perspiration. The slim, sinewy body he balanced lightly on the reed armchair gave evidence of a contentment as great as if it were bathed with pure, cool air of the maiden.

His body rested, but the mind of the adventurer did not. It throbbed with a myriad of relentless thoughts and ideas.

Calcutta offered a refuge, but how long would it be safe for him to remain? After the affair at Madras, concerning the powerful Maharaja of Mysore and the French crook who was known as Gustave La Roche, he had come here to Calcutta. The second city of the empire was a rabbit warren, where the abating of storms might be awaited. But would it continue to remain so?

He thought of the adventure of Madras.

The Maharaja of Mysore had been indiscreet enough to wear the Tiger-eye Emerald on his full-dress uniform during the progress of a military street parade. Captain Morehead, a balcony spectator of the affair, had seen the stone and coveted it.

He had had no means of knowing that, in the crowd lining the gutters, Gustave La Roche, too, had glimpsed the great emerald and had felt the fierce thrill of a covetous desire.

The Maharaja of Mysore, after the British governor-general had reviewed the pageant, had ridden his charger back to his impressive estate, some two miles northwest of the outskirts of the city. There, also, Captain Morehead had ridden when darkness held the East in the palm of a mighty hand. And there, likewise, Gustave La Roche had journeyed.

The adventurer had found the Maharaja of Mysore at ease after his strenuous day. He had had himself introduced as being the representative of a South African diamond merchant with wares to sell.

The Maharaja of Mysore, happy to discuss his hobby, had asked him in, and their conversation had been long and pleasant.

At the precise instant that Captain Morehead was being shown the Tiger-eye Emerald Gustave La Roche had stepped through the hanging portieres, a drawn automatic in each hand.

What followed would always remain an exhilarating memory to the adventurer. The Maharaja of Mysore, with a promptness to be commended, had stepped on a concealed floor-switch and plunged the room in utter darkness. Captain Morehead had swung clear of the resulting fracas, vaulted through an open window, found his horse where he had picketed him, and, by a circuitous route, had ridden back to Madras. From there he

had sailed at sun-up on one of the Royal India mail packets.

And with him, hung in a chamois pouch around his neck, went the magnificant Tiger-eye Emerald.

Captain Morehead flicked the long ash from his cheroot and exhaled a lazy, lacy cloud of smoke. He had no means of knowing the fate of his rival, La Roche, but he was certain that the French crook had recognized him in the brief instant before the lights had winked out.

He had placed no low value on La Roche's capabilities or prowess. More than once their trails had crossed; more than once he had outwitted the other or beaten him to a coup. If La Roche had escaped, the adventurer realized that the man would track him across the face of the world in an effort, however vain or hopeless, to win back the great green gem.

Never, until the jewel was disposed of in Paris, would Captain Morehead's sleep be untroubled; never might he set foot abroad by day that an ominous shadow wouldn't lurk at his elbow. For, in addition to La Roche, he had the powerful Maharaja of Mysore to consider. The owner of the emerald would make desperate attempts, suave and subtle, to recover his stolen property.

The clock struck ten.

Through the open window, across the dark vista of the garden, drifted the night music of the city. It breathed an invitation for the stranger within its gates to fare forth into the wayside and mingle with its crowds.

Safety did not mean being cooped up in a small room. Captain Morehead felt the enticement of the hurdy-gurdy street life that called so persuasively. Danger might stalk within its currents, but it was not his nature to turn from it like a weakling.

He stood up, stretched, and snapped the stub of his cheroot out into the garden, turning away from the window and thus failing to observe the figure, lurking below, that dodged the missile of the cigar and crept toward the garden wall swiftly and quietly. Captain Morehead switched off the insect-circled incandescent, opened the door of his room, listened, locked it, then drew back the covers from the bed and exposed the ticking of the mattress. He pulled one corner open with his steel-like fingers and ran a hand into the hair wadding. He took something out and put something back. At length, opening his shirt front, he hung about his neck a chamois pouch suspended from two thin but tough leather thongs.

A few minutes later he remade the bed carefully, placed his service automatic in its spider-web cradle under his left arm, and donned jacket and pith helmet.

Then he locked the door of his room from the outside, secreted the key under a loose board in the floor, and made his way down into the street.

For all the heat, the broad Machua Bazaar street swarmed and hummed with life and activity. The stream of native life rolled on, ceaselessly fluent. A panorama of the Court of Kings could not be more fantastic or colorful.

Music whispered through the drone of voices; the riffraff of the water-front had invaded the thoroughfare for debauchery and excitement; criminals slunk along, eyes bright with plots. Soldiers from the fort and women in every state of glittering dress and undress drifted past. It was the hour of flood-tide.

Stepping into the throng, Captain Morehead caught the half stench, half fragrance of the East he knew so well. To the adventurer the robed figures, so gaudy or subdued, the medley of noises—whispers, broken bits of conversation, sobs, deep-throated shouts, laughter, the sing-song wail of shuffling Jats—seemed as weird and fascinating and colorful as any one of the "Thousand-and-One Nights."

Almost before he was aware of it, Captain Morehead found that his feet were leading him down a narrow alley and into the Lar Bazaar.

On his previous visit to Calcutta Captain Morehead had explored the place by daylight. He knew it as an area in which the Five Hundred Merchants sold their products. He knew it as an irradiant space, filled with snake-charmers, street performers and magicians seeking the alms of the passer-by with every artifice at command.

At night the Lar Bazaar was a new and different quarter. In a single stride he seemed to have passed from the flare of light and rumble of conversation into comparative silence.

Here the restless tide of native life ebbed and flowed languidly. And yet, for all of its quiet and peaceful air, Captain Morehead realized this hinterland of the bazaar called for alert faculties; this was a space shut off by itself; no policeman in tunic, helmet and truncheon was visible.

He strode along, past rug-hung stall, sweetmeat shop and goldsmith, past bird stores where brilliantly fathered choristers added a garrulous note to the singing symphony. A flower stall, in front of which was a gigantic glass tank containing silver fish, cloyed the heavy air with the drowsy sweetness of musk, thuia, pepal and jasmine.

He passed on, his keen gaze focused idly on a Mahratta, gaunt, gray and black-visaged, in whose loose, shambling walk something seemed familiar. Before he could range alongside the man and appraise him with a searching glance, the man turned into the door of another rug shop and disappeared.

At that same moment Captain Morehead heard the riple of a woman's laugh.

He stopped and turned his head to the gloomy lamp-lit interior of the store. The woman who had laughed was displaying a Pena prayer-rug to three squat oily Bengals with turbaned heads.

The adventurer, motionless, watched the woman speculatively. He heard the gentle clash of her jeweled bracelet on bare arms, warm and rounded, the soft swish of draperies. He saw, when she moved slightly, that from a linked chain of gold hung a weighty pendant—a blood-red ruby of considerable size and glitter.

She was young, graceful, slender and—veiled. It was not so much of the ruby at her throat that held his attention closely and compelled him to stare in amazement. It was simply that, even though she was veiled, it was dishonorable for a woman of a Rajput's household to be seen with a stranger, to converse with him and, most of all, to soil her dignity by stooping to sell an article of goods.

While the adventurer looked at those viewing the rug—a shimmering thing of wonderful design—from some quarter near at hand there sounded a low, melodious whistle.

Simultaneously a native youth, puppet-like, sprang up from behind a bale of unopened rugs and threw himself upon the veiled girl, tearing at the linked chain that held the pendulous ruby throbbing at her white throat.

Instantly all was confusion.

With excited squeals and shouts the three Bengalese sought wildly to halt the miscreant, but in such bewildered fashion that they merely succeeded in getting in one another's way and permitting the native boy to drag the chain tightly against her neck, the girl striking at him with all her strength.

The onslaught of the thief had been so rapid and surprising that the chain was half removed from the throat of the girl before Captain Morehead stirred himself to immediate action. With excited howls from the crowd and the yelps of the Bengalese conjuring up a street rabble, he flung himself forward.

A dozen rapid steps carried him to the strugglers. He gripped the bare, greasy shoulders of the youth, whirled him clawing away from his prey, and hurled him backward over the bale of rugs with a crashing right-hand hook.

The crowd, swelling every moment, hedged in the shop as the youth fell, scrambled to his feet and darted away. The onlookers gesticulated wildly, demanding vengeance for a crime they had no inkling of. Before he could draw a breath Captain Morehead saw in the threatening faces and shaking fists of the rabble that the débris of alley and gutter believed that he himself was the one responsible for the alarm raised. Already he could hear voices demanding his life.

The rising murmur grew to the rumbling of a great waterfall. The adventurer knew to what lengths an Eastern mob, aroused to a pitch of frenzy, would go. He gave ground, grasping his automatic, but re-

fraining from using it. A single shot and he would be torn to fragments.

He fell back still farther, trying to shout an explanation in Urda, realizing that it was useless. At the same instant he felt a hand clutching his arm and heard, dream-like, the imploring words a voice behind him spoke:

"*Sahib!* Follow me! This way!"

A dark face was thrust up to his, a knife gleamed. Captain Morehead struck with the heavy butt of his service revolver. Ere the shrill scream of pain that broke out above the thunder of the mob had died down the hand on his arm had led him back to a door. It opened and he sprang through it behind his guide, coming out into the quiet of the Chowringhee maze of side streets.

It was only then that the adventurer realized that the slender, veiled girl with the clashing bracelets and swinging ruby had been his rescuer.

She did not speak as they traversed the length of the alley and came out upon the bazaar road. Once or twice she halted and listened to the echoes of the clamor they had left behind. Once or twice, too, she guided him with her touch. She displayed a perfect familiarity with the ground being covered.

When they had gone a half mile or more, running and walking by turn, she delved into another covered alley, came out on a small square, and halted before the door of a house with crumbling stucco and rusty, unsafe iron balconies—an unprepossessing pile of absurd architecture.

Now the muttering of the throng in the Lar Bazaar had been outdistanced. While the girl drew a number of uneven breaths the adventurer heard the drip of water and the play of the desert breeze, thick with a stagnant stench seemingly picked up at the alley's mouth.

"My lord," said the girl in a low, musical voice, "there is still danger. The crowd will make its way into the bazaar road later, by way of Cinglinkuto street. They will watch the mouth of the alley. If you will give yourself into my hands I will see that no harm befalls you." She gestured, as if silently explaining, to the foreboding house in whose shadow they lurked. Captain Morehead inclined his head, his shrewd gray eyes focused on the gleaming ruby that trembled against the satin whiteness of her rounded throat.

"Your words," he said in fluent Hindustani, "are words of wisdow and logic. Lead and I will follow."

The girl smiled quickly, as if pleased with his decision, and rapped on the iron-bound door set flush with the street. This door opened after a minute and she bowed, motioning for him to enter with her. Captain Morehead heard the door close soundlessly and felt the cold flags of the passage beneath his feet.

It was pitch dark.

"This way, *hazoor*," the girl murmured, slipping her hand, soft and warm, into his own.

He counted his steps mechanically, damp, cool air swimming past his lean face. The girl pushed open another door. They crossed some sort of foyer or ante-room and then entered a chamber, the sight of which caused the lips of the adventurer to tighten.

Not at all in keeping with the desolate air of the house was this room he stepped into. It was high-ceilinged and lighted by festoons of hanging oil lamps of bronze—a place wonderfully appointed, with rare rugs, tapestries and cloth-of-gold-covered divans. The perfume of incense rode on the air; golden portieres concealed the windows—if windows there were—and a high screen of peacock feathers shielded a door at the southerly end of the apartment.

Captain Morehead drank in this setting with his eyes, as he might have the throne-room described in some Hindu legend. Who, he asked himself, was this veiled girl, and whose house was this, so magnificently furnished?

"You are safe, *sahib*," she said, gliding to his side.

While he acknowledged the fact and thanked her for her timely assistance, she made a little murmur and with an alluring gesture swept the veil from her face. Captain Morehead caught his breath, momentarily overpowered by the superb loveliness of her. For, as she stood swaying before him and looking straight into his

eyes, he saw that she was more beautiful than any woman he had ever seen in his journey down the long trail that girdled the face of the globe.

The oval of the face she lifted to him was perfect, as creamy as old ivory, with a faint scarlet flush where the blood ran warm beneath the skin. Her hair was ebony and as lustrous as silk; her brows were arches of midnight darkness; her eyes mystic pools lighted with an ardent inner fire; her mouth sweet and small, the full, firm petals of the poppy.

"My name, *sahib,*" she said, while the man before her stared, fascinated, "is Areni. They call me the Lady of the Bazaars because I am the daughter of Tilka Singh, the rug merchant. It pleases me to dress like the member of the household of a Rajput, my lord; hence my bright garments and bangles. Sit thee down beside me and let thy strength return. You were sorely taxed, I could see."

She sank down on the nearest divan and Captain Morehead seated himself beside her.

"Coffee!" she said, striking the palms of her hands together. "And then, *hazoor,* you must tell me of yourself."

The screen shook and a servant entered. The adventurer eyed the man indifferently and without moving, though a slow pulse began to beat within him.

This servant who took the orders of the girl was the same gray, gaunt Mahratta he had seen disappear into the rug shop of the Lar Bazaar!

He studied the man intently when he returned with a tray containing cups and a steaming pot of coffee, but the Mahratta avoided his glance, kept his head lowered, and presently shuffled off, the same, familiar swing in his walk that had first attracted Captain Morehead's attention.

"Your servant," he said to the girl when they were alone, "seems ill-experienced, clumsy."

The girl showed her teeth in a smile.

"Alas, my lord, forgive him; he is a new man. He came to me only one week ago. It is difficult to obtain servants that are both skilled and graceful."

The adventurer contented himself with a single cup of coffee, consuming it after the girl had sweetened her own cup and drank from it. It came from the same pot, and if it was drugged the effect upon both would be identical. Not for nothing had he braved the dangers of a thousand desperate exploits. The affair, he thought, strongly resembled a crafty, well-planned trap.

While he conversed with the girl, eyeing the dangling ruby, he allowed his mind to creep back over the events that had transpired since he had left the Hotel Empire. The affair of the Lar Bazaar hinted of a desperate plot, save for one important detail. If it were a plot, how were the plotters to know that he intended visiting the quarter—when he had moved into it quite by chance?

And yet there were suspicious incidents not to be overlooked or disregarded: the three squealing Bengalese who blocked the youth's escape and brought the crowd into the place; the native boy himself, who with any sort of strength could have pulled away the linked chain with its precious pendant; the whine of the melodious whistle that he distinctly had heard ere the thief had leaped from behind the rug-bales.

One thing perplexed him.

He knew the truth when he heard it spoken, and the girl who styled herself the Lady of the Bazaars had spoken the truth when she had said that the Mahratta servant was a new man. The gaunt gray one had displayed hesitation in stepping behind the screen, not knowing apparently whether to leave by the right or left of it; and a not-to-be-mistaken unfamiliarity with the placing of the apartment's furniture, when he had carried in the tray.

This Captain Morehead was certain of. The man had not been in the room many times before.

While these thoughts filtered through his mind the girl moved closer to him on the divan. He caught the languorous scent of her black hair and watched the color deepen on her cheeks.

"Why do you not speak to me, my lord?" she asked in a hushed voice. "Do I not find favor in your eyes?"

Captain Morehead flung an impulsive arm about her slim shoulders and kissed the scarlet blot of her mouth.

"You are beautiful," he said ardently, "as the first bright star of evening. You are as lovely as a banyan in a little pool. You are like a splendid flower whose garden is the world!"

She laughed and moved closer to him.

"*Lalji!* My ears are pleased. Can I be all these things you say I am?"

She flung out a bare arm in eloquent gesture, her voice gold, her eyes stars.

"You are," said the captain. "But I will tell you what you are *not.*"

She drew back a little and favored him with a direct stare of inquiry.

"And that, my lord?"

Captain Morehead circled her shoulders with his arms.

"You are not the Lady of the Bazaars you would have me believe! You are not the daughter of any rug merchant. You are pretending to be some one impossible for you to imitate or impersonate. Tell me who you are!"

He drew her close to him, detecting a quick quiver that ran through her.

"What do you mean, *hazoor?*" she asked, frightened.

Against his face the adventurer felt the airy touch of her soft hair and the gale of her fragrant breath. So engrossed was he that he failed to notice that the hanging lamps were, one by one, sputtering out.

"There is a purpose behind this masquerade," he stated bluntly. "Why did you bring me here? What is the reason? What caprice of Fate threw you into this affair? Who are you? What are you?"

With disconcerting abruptness the last two lamps winked out together. Save for a falling ray of pale moonlight, seeping down through a transom overhead, the room was wrapped under the wings of Stygian blackness.

Then through it, as sharp as the blade of a Malay *kris,* a cool voice clove the walls of gloom:

"You are both covered! A single move and I will blow you into eternity!"

A tinge of swift surprise surged through the adventurer. That cool, foreign-accented voice, though speaking in Urdu, could belong but to one person—a man he had last seen in the Madras residence of the Maharaja of Mysore—Gustave La Roche, the French crook!

He laughed shortly.

"I will take the automatic you carry so snugly under your left arm, captain," the voice said. "Please do not make the mistake of trying to move—or do anything you might regret."

A figure came out of the shadows. In the spectral moonwash the slouching Mahratta, now erect and brisk, moved to the divan and pressed the cold muzzle of his automatic to the forehead of the adventurer. He kept it there until he had deftly removed the weapon that hung on its web of silk thread.

"This time," the voice drawled, "I appear to have a bit the best of the situation. You may release the girl and move two feet away from her. I have something to say to you both."

"You dog!" she cried softly. "You shall never leave here alive!"

The Frenchman laughed coldly.

"So *you* say! I think differently. A few minutes more will tell. You thought to hoodwink me by pretending to be the Lady of the Bazaars, but I knew you before you left Madras. I knew you were in the employ of the Maharaja of Mysore. I knew you had been sent to Calcutta in an effort to win back the Tiger-eye Emerald. I knew all these things, and so I came to you as the Mahratta in quest of work. To-night you gave me a few silver coins and sent me to entice our friend the captain to the Lar Bazaar, so that *you* could save him and bring him here. It was not necessary to lure him to the quarter; he came by himself, of his own will, oddly enough. These things you do not know, nor the fact that I carefully measured the oil in the lamps of this room, making it possible for them to burn out after you had been here an hour."

He rambled on, while Captain Morehead knit his brows.

"Enough of this!" La Roche said with sudden brusqueness, moving to the divan

again. "Produce the emerald, captain! You wear it in a little chamois bag hung about your neck! I saw you put it there! Hand it over!"

The adventurer laughed again.

"And if I refuse?"

La Roche stepped closer.

"I will count five slowly. Take the stone from the bag and hold it in the moonlight so that I can see you are not tricking me. If, at the end of that time, you have not handed it over, before God, I will shoot you down as the Maharaja would have shot me! *One—two—three!*"

With quick fingers Captain Morehead tore open his shirt, parted the pouch of chamois and dumped its contents into his hand, lifting it and holding it out in the moonlight.

Bathed with the spectral glow, the great emerald burned like a green star filled with a million tongues of leaping flame.

La Roche grasped it with a throaty exclamation.

"Now go!"

When he reached the door and entered the ante-room the adventurer, one hand over the right pocket of his jacket, halted. He could not go and leave the girl in the power of the other. Yet to remain would be to court disaster.

Should he go or stay?

Hardly had he asked himself the question when a shrill cry rang out in the chamber back of him. Captain Morehead laughed again. He had almost forgotten that the girl had agents aiding her; that she would not take the risk of being alone unguarded.

With the swiftness of a shadow he ran down the damp, cool passage to the outer door, feeling a vague pity for the man who had hoped to outwit the powerful Maharaja of Mysore.

When he flung open the street door the adventurer listened a minute.

Far within he heard a pistol bark twice, the muted sounds of scuffling, then silence, and the drip of water.

The dawn of another stifling day was creeping up into the eastern sky as Captain Morehead lifted the loose board in the public corridor of the Hotel Empire, plucked out his hidden key, fitted it to the latch of his door and admitted himself to his room, sinking down in the chair by the window that looked into the garden.

Weary though he was, slumber was not for him. In sixty minutes a train was leaving for Darjeeling. He must be aboard it—at a respectful distance from the long arm of the Maharaja of Mysore and the wrath of Gustave La Roche, if fate decreed that the man was to escape again.

Attaining his feet, Captain Morehead crossed to his bed and stripped off the covers until the mattress was revealed. He burrowed a hand into a corner of it, feeling in the hair wadding, and at length drew out a magnificent emerald—a thing of fire and flash.

"As if," he said softly, "I would go about Calcutta with a fortune around my neck—poor fool!"

Withdrawing the chamois pouch, he placed the stone inside, prodding it down with his fingers. There was still space within the container for another article of value. After a brief interlude the adventurer dropped a hand to the right pocket of his jacket and lifted out a linked chain of gold, from which dangled a blood-red ruby.

This, likewise, he examined before consigning it to the pouch.

"She was as beautiful," he said moodily, "as the first bright star of the evening."

Smiling slightly, Captain Morehead closed the pouch.

Trifling Slips Trip Most Crooks

By ALLAN VAN HOESEN

"A DETECTIVE may make many mistakes and still land his man. With the criminal it is different. A single mistake may be fatal to him."

We believe it was George S. Dougherty, the well-known detective, who gave the foregoing statement its first publicity.

Talking with the writer recently, Police Commissioner R. E. Enright, of New York City, expressed a similar thought, though amplifying it, in these words:

"If I could get all the crooks in the United States into one room, I believe I could reduce crime in this country to an insignificant minimum. For, with the records to back me, I would prove to them that the persistent offender always comes to grief—sometimes sooner, sometimes later.

"The chief fault with criminals is that they (men and women) are abnormally conceited and vain. No matter how little brain, breeding or education they may have, they are certain in their own minds that they are very clever. And it is this thick-headed cocksureness of their ability which causes them to take the chances that ultimately land them behind the bars.

"The outlaws with better brains are more careful, but it is only their egoism which causes them to believe that they can break the laws indefinitely without being caught.

"But even these some day make a slip, neglect some detail, and arrest follows. And the slips which throw the criminals into the hands of the authorities usually are so trifling that the crooks are utterly oblivious that they have left important clues."

If further testimony were needed to support the statements of these authorities, it could be obtained from any veteran newspaper man who has made a specialty of covering "crime stories," particularly in the larger cities. These men usually work with the police, and they bring to bear upon any important crime an intelligence and keen sense of imagination that often result in uncovering good leads that escape even the trained eyes of investigating officials.

Here are some notable cases which exemplify the truism that apparently insignificant slips brought about the capture of criminals who believed that they had covered their tracks so skillfully that they never would be entangled in any police dragnet.

Turning back the crime files something more than twenty-five years, attention is arrested by a most conspicuous example: a murder case that, while it held the interest of persons throughout the civilized world for a long period, actually revolved about an apparently simple little incident. But evidence built upon that trifling happening caused a woman to be adjudged guilty of a capital crime and condemned to death. Following the commutation of her sentence to life imprisonment, thousands of persons who refused to accept the judgment of her jury struggled for years to obtain her freedom.

The principal in this case was Mrs. Florence Elizabeth Maybrick, of New York, who was accused of killing her husband, James Maybrick, twenty-two years her senior and a wealthy Liverpool cotton broker, by the administration of arsenic.

Mrs. Maybrick, when but eighteen years old, was returning from Europe with her mother when she met the fatherly and substantial Britisher on shipboard. He made violent love to the entertaining miss, and finally obtained the promise of the girl to wed. The mother, who had had three husbands,

two of whom died after a very brief illness, raised no objection to the unusual union, and the couple were married in St. James Church, Piccadilly, London. Later they took up their residence in the magnificent Maybrick estate, Battlecrease Manor, near Liverpool.

They had two children, and it was believed by their friends that they lived amicably until the man died suddenly, and an autopsy, insisted upon by his family, showed that he had been poisoned with arsenic. Then the storm broke, and following the funeral Mrs. Maybrick was arrested, charged with the murder.

It soon developed that the woman had formed a strong attachment for another Liverpool cotton broker, A. Buerly, who was much nearer her age. The husband had suspected the intimacy, and he and his wife had quarreled, though outsiders did not know of this.

Wishing to communicate with Buerly, who was about to flee the country, and believing that her movements were watched, the woman wrote him a letter and endeavored to send it by means that would escape the eyes of her husband or those acting for him. Stopping a nurse girl who was leaving the house to take the baby for its daily airing in a carriage, Mrs. Maybrick gave her the letter and told her to post it.

In crossing a street the servant dropped the letter, and when she rescued it from the mud of the gutter it was so soiled that she determined to address a clean envelope and send it in that.

However, when she tore away the begrimed covering, curiosity overcame her discretion, and she read the missive, in which Mrs. Maybrick referred to Buerly as "dearest." In the epistle she told the man not to go abroad, that her husband was dying, and that he still believed the story she had told him that Buerly and she were innocent of caring for each other and would not learn otherwise before he passed away.

Frightened, the nurse gave the letter to Maybrick's brother Edwin, and it was this letter that caused Mrs. Maybrick's arrest and conviction.

In many places, but particularly in this country, there was much sympathy for the woman, and many moves were undertaken to obtain her pardon. One petition, signed by many prominent Americans, was sent directly to Queen Victoria.

The trifling incident of the love letter being dropped into the mud led to the staging of one of the world's most famous murder trials. And yet, whether the woman was innocent or guilty, how could she have had sufficient foresight to anticipate such a circumstance and guard against it?

France's most notorious murderer, "Bluebeard" Henri Désiré Landau, stepped upon the guillotine at Versailles shortly after daybreak on the morning of February 25, 1922. As the first rays of the rising sun topped the walls of the grim old prison barracks and the angelus bells in the near-by churches tolled softly, his head fell into the basket. A little slip in carrying out one of his innumerable crimes caused him to pay the death penalty.

The man had been found guilty of killing ten women and a boy, whose bodies he had destroyed by burning them or by throwing their dismembered limbs into ponds. To most of the women he had introduced himself through the medium of marriage advertisements, and it was as his fiancée that he lured each victim to one of the cottages he maintained in the country, whence they disappeared. In his assumed character of second-hand dealer he took charge of the property of the women, after sufficient time had elpased, following their disappearance, for them to be declared "legally dead." The furniture and household goods he sold, and their savings he pocketed.

Landau was one of the cleverest criminals that ever faced a French jury, and that is saying much for a man living in a land which, despite a secret service second to none, has been the scene of some of the most revolting crimes perpetrated in civilized communities. His trial lasted nearly a month, but although the defence, largely conducted by himself, was most clever, because of his amazing knowledge of the laws governing murder cases, he was found guilty.

Unimpeachable proof proved him to be

a creature of unspeakable degeneration, but standing out above everything else were his miserly habits. He never spent a sou unless he was compelled to do so to sustain life or to carry through some of his outrageous schemes. And it was his penuriousness which ultimately brought about his arrest, conviction and execution.

The disappearance of the women to whom he became engaged occasionally directed suspicion toward him, but so abnormally clever was the man that for years the police were unable to fasten anything upon him. Then came the fatal slip.

After becoming engaged to the tenth woman, Mlle. Marchadier, he persuaded her to accompany him to the country, taking with her a dowry of about $1,000. And, yielding to his excessive penurious urge, he purchased a round-trip ticket for himself and a one-way ticket for his fiancée. After the woman disappeared the detectives tracing his movements stumbled upon this fact. It was significant. It indicated deliberate purpose to return—alone. Certain at last that he was the murderer, the authorities never let up until they had obtained sufficient evidence to warrant bringing him to trial and death upon the guillotine.

It was not until after his arrest that a complete search was made of a cottage he owned at Gambias, twenty miles from Versailles. There they found a list of names, purporting to be those of persons from whom he had purchased furniture. But a check-up of the names showed they were of women to whom the slayer had been engaged, and all of whom had disappeared. The boy murdered was the son of a widow he had promised to marry.

Yes, a one-way railroad ticket, a cheap bit of pasteboard, was the real clue that brought about the undoing of France's most diabolical killer, a man who had successfully dodged the law for years and only occasionally was under suspicion.

In this country there have been innumerable instances in which criminals met their Waterloo because of apparently inconsequential happenings. In none of the more famous cases, however, was this more clearly shown than in that of William Guldensuppe, the handsome and athletic rubber at one of New York's most fashionable baths, who was brutally done to death in 1897.

In the latter part of June of that year some small boys swimming in the East River noted a bundle, wrapped in oilcloth, floating with the tide, and towed it ashore. When they stripped away the wrappings the upper portion of a man's torso, with the arms attached, but the head missing, rolled out.

In wild fright they ran until they met a policeman, to whom they told of their gruesome find. The portion of the unknown's body was removed to the morgue, and a few hours later other boys, tramping through a patch of Long Island woods, found the remainder of the torso.

Physicians who examined the parts of the body determined that the man had been strangled with a rope, then stabbed and hacked to death and his body dismembered. An ordinary carpenter's saw had been used, and the bungling character of the work proved that no medical students had participated in the dissection, as was at first suspected. It also was established that the man had been slain but a few hours before the torso was found.

It was while the cuts were being carefully examined that one of the doctors called attention to the fact that a small bit of flesh had been severed from one arm, and suggested that the murderer might have done it to destroy some mark of identification. This chance remark, with thousands of others concerning how the identity of the man might be established, was printed in the newspapers the following day. Later the legs were discovered, but the head could not be located. In the first few days of the sensation many identifications of the body were made, but all proved to be incorrect and the police found themselves facing a stone wall.

Just about the time many newspapers began announcing that the murder probably never would be solved, one of the New York dailies determined to redouble its efforts to untangle the mystery. Among the new men this paper assigned to the case was a veteran reporter who knew his New York

best after Broadway's night lights were turned on full.

He had been staying up late and sleeping for but brief intervals for some time, and decided that a Turkish bath was what he needed most to fit him for the task ahead. All he knew about the case was what he had read, but, like every other reporter of the time, he had studied the news items carefully.

At the bath he worked his way through without unnecessary delay until he reached the rubbing table. There he demanded quick service, for he was anxious to get outside and begin his labors. A rubber stepped to his side—a stranger—but the reporter demanded the one who cared for him regularly, Billy Guldensuppe. He was told that Billy had been away from the bath for some days, and that nobody knew where he was, though it had been taken for granted that he might be engaged in an affair with "another woman." The rubber was known as a ladies' man, with many friends.

Suddenly the sixth sense which the famous Julian Ralph used to insist was possessed by all good newspaper men caused the hero of this tale to sit erect and do some heavy thinking. The body at the morgue, according to the newspapers, was that of a large, powerful man; a doctor had suggested that a piece of flesh had been cut from one arm to obliterate some mark of identification. Billy was big and powerful, and there was a small tattoo mark on his arm.

Dropping back and instructing the unfamiliar rubber to proceed, the reporter inquired casually when Billy had last been seen at the baths. The date given corresponded exactly with that fixed by the physicians as the day of the murder. Being as wise as they made 'em, and determined to keep his hunch for his own paper, the reporter pretended to lose interest in the matter, and finally strolled from the baths as nonchalantly as though he had nothing more burdensome on his mind than his hat.

But once in the street he became all action, and made for the morgue by the shortest route. It was late, but his badge (New York newspaper men carry police cards today) served as a pass; he was admitted and allowed to see the body. Tipping the attendant, he explained that he had just been assigned to the case and wanted to view the remains as a beginning. It required some restraint to withhold a cry of triumph when he noted the arm from which the flesh had been cut. That it was Guldensuppe's arm he was certain, and the familiar tattoo mark was missing.

He reached his office in next to no time, and after being closeted briefly with the managing and night editors, left the building accompanied by a small army of reporters. These kept in communication throughout the night, and their efforts disclosed the fact that Guldensuppe had been the lover of Mrs. Augusta Nack, wife of the driver of a bakery wagon, and that the rubber had left the woman for some one more attractive, thereby arousing the jealousy of the one discarded.

It was then that the reporters took the police into their confidence, and Nack was dragged from his wagon and arrested while making his early deliveries on suspicion of having killed the former favorite of his wife.

That was the beginning of the end. Nack proved that he had been separated from his wife for a considerable time, and knew nothing of the case, but from his friends the police learned about Guldensuppe, and that when he left Mrs. Nack she had acquired another sweetheart, Martin Thorn, a barber. The woman and the barber were arrested, the house where the killing occurred was located, the "murder tools" were found, and the murder definitely fastened upon the pair.

A clever lawyer retained by the woman, who realized that he could not obtain her acquittal, had her turn state's evidence. She confessed that Guldensuppe had been enticed to a house in an unfrequented locality where she and Thorn killed him and cut up his body. It was the barber who carried the parts to different places and endeavored to hide them. He was executed and the woman was sent to prison for a long term.

But it was the fact that a reporter happened to remember that out of thousands of men with whom he was acquainted one had

a tattoo mark in a certain place on his arm, which brought about the clearing up of the mystery. The slip made by the murderers was in cutting away this tattoo mark, instead of severing the arms, and doing away with them as effectively as they did with the man's head.

In the summer of 1919 Dr. Walter Keen Wilkins, a resident of Long Beach, a fashionable Long Island resort, was found guilty of killing his wife, Mrs. Julia Krauss Wilkins. It was alleged by the prosecution that the doctor removed the woman that he might gain control of her property, which was considerable and which she possessed when she married him.

Wilkins's story was that when he and his wife were about to enter their home late at night they were set upon by two burglars, who beat them with clubs. The woman was clubbed to death, and the man was found severely beaten about the face and head. Had the doctor told his first story and then kept his mouth shut, the probabilities are that he would not even have been arrested. But he talked too much in an endeavor to establish a perfect alibi. He amplified his original tale with such complete descriptions of the assailants that the police were amazed, and when he stated that one of the thieves had called the other "Dick," he added a fatal dash of color. With their suspicions once directed against him, they went to work to prove that he had lied. They contended that it had been too dark for him to have seen and noted all the things he claimed, that he never would have taken cognizance of them in the short, sharp fight he said took place before he was rendered unconscious, and that it was practically unknown for a robber to call the name of a confederate while they were engaged in a hold-up. Further investigation caused the arrest of Wilkins, and his conviction followed. He cheated the law, however, by committing suicide two days after the verdict was returned. He is not the only offender to convict himself by offering too good an alibi.

Carl Wanderer, most conspicuous of Chicago's murderers of 1920, was in the habit of calling his wife "Pal." When he walked to the gallows to give his life for murdering her and a man he had enticed to his home, he lived true to his love for the dramatic by singing a popular song entitled, "Oh, pal, why don't you answer me?" He always referred to Edward J. Ryan, the man he killed, as the "poor boob." To his wife he had been married less than a year.

The murder was unusually outrageous. Tiring of his wife and unwilling to add to his cares the support of his child, he decided to kill the woman. But he planned to do this in a way that would divert suspicion from him.

Mrs. Wanderer and the "poor boob" were slain in the hallway of the Wanderer apartment house in June, 1920. Mrs. Wanderer's mother, attracted by shots, found her daughter dying and Wanderer sitting on the body of the stranger, methodically beating him with a pistol. Wanderer insisted that the stranger had attempted a hold-up in the dark hallway and shot Mrs. Wanderer, and in return he had killed the burglar. For a time it looked as if he would get away with the story. But in the pocket of the dead man the police found part of a pack of expensive cigarettes, and they noted that whenever they questioned Wanderer he smoked the same kind. Then, without letting him know that he was under suspicion, they went to work in earnest. Finally they discovered that early in the evening of the murder Wanderer had been seen with a ragged stranger in a certain neighborhood, and tireless inquiry located a cigar store into which he had gone and purchased two packages of cigarettes of the kind he used, which were found on the stranger. With this start they kept going until they located who had loaned Wanderer a pistol at one time, and he identified the weapon alleged to have been used by the stranger as his property. Confronted with these facts, Wanderer broke down and confessed after a long period of grilling. He said that he never had cared for his wife, wanted to get rid of her, and would not shoulder the responsibility of rearing a baby.

Wanderer had scraped an acquaintance with the penniless, ragged stranger in the street and hired him to come to his home

and rush into the hallway, saying the plan was just a joke he wanted to play on his wife, to frighten her. At the time he engaged the man Wanderer knew that he intended to kill him, but to allay any suspicions the stranger might have he bought him a meal and a pack of cigarettes. Had Wanderer purchased two different brands he might have gotten away with his diabolical scheme.

Whether fishing is one of the outdoor sports generally popular with crookdom, the writer is unable to state, but devotion to the pastime made popular by Sir Izak Walton recently brought about the capture of a man and a woman whom the New York authorities were most anxious to land behind bars, but of whom they had lost all track.

Few would think that a trifling incident connected with the fishing excursion near a tiny, interior Indiana village would result in arrests of crime committed in far-off New York, but it was another case of "you never can tell." And probably no one was more surprised at the result of the slip made while they were using their rods than the persons who had successfully dodged the police for many weeks.

It was on a bright day in recent July that a pretty young woman but twenty years of age, her husband, twenty-three, and a male companion, left the little Indiana village at which they had arrived two nights previous in an expensive automobile, announcing they were going fishing. Apparently care-free tourists, with plenty of money to spend, and touring at random, they had made friends in the brief time they had been at the hotel, and carried rods and tackle lent them by obliging acquaintances.

Following directions, they reached a picturesque brook that tumbled along over stones and past fallen trees, but the fishing there proved poor. However, they were not discouraged, and tramped along the bank of the stream until it spread out suddenly into a large, lazy pond, with deep shadows along its edges, the very place where big fish would lie in the cool near the lily roots.

There was one "out" to the picture, though. A large sign announced that the place was private property and that fishing was prohibited. However, signs meant nothing in the lives of this trio, and hooks were promptly baited and cast and the fish began to bite.

But at the height of the fun two large men carrying business-like clubs and wearing large stars pinned to their suspenders arrested the trespassers and took them before the local justice of the peace. The man and wife were penitent, paid their fines and departed, but the other man lost his temper, said things which annoyed the court, and was sentenced to jail for seventeen days.

A newspaper man who had written the story thought it peculiar that the couple had departed for parts unknown without waiting for their companion to be released, particularly as all had announced they were on their way to their home in New York. He suggested that the authorities in that city be notified of the arrest of the trio, and this was done, though not until the day before the prisoner was released.

The description of the woman and her companions caused unusual interest at New York's police headquarters, and detectives were sent at once to Indiana. They arrived after the prisoners had been set free and departed, but learned enough to know that they wanted the three very much; had wanted them for a considerable time, in fact.

The officers picked up the trail of the man and wife, because they were informed that the couple had stolen and abandoned several automobiles on their way East, and finally located them in the full enjoyment of a Long Island bungalow in a picturesque town twenty miles from New York. The other man was not caught.

The young woman, who not long before her flight from the metropolis had been released after being arrested on a charge of abandoning her child and on suspicion of being connected with the murder of one of her male acquaintances, refused at first to talk. Her husband, however, according to the police, made a complete confession, in which he asserted that the trio had robbed many places, his wife acting as lookout. Learning of this, the woman talked freely to the police, and accused her husband of

making her a criminal after she married him, when she was but fifteen years old.

Among the crimes the police stated were admitted by the pair was the hold-up and robbery of poolrooms and stores in Brooklyn, attempts to rob a café and a seaside hotel, the shooting of persons who interfered with them in some of these places, and the serious wounding of a railroad grade crossing guard who refused to raise the gates when they were making their getaway. Their travels took them as far West as Iowa.

Their capture can be traced to their neglect to obey the "no fishing" sign on the outskirts of the little Indiana hamlet.

Some time ago a very wealthy woman was dragged from the corridor of a fashionable New York apartment house, where she had attended a New Year's party, into a flat which was occupied by four men. Jewelry valued at $300,000 was stripped from her, after which she was rendered unconscious, trussed up, and left locked in the place by the outlaws.

One of the men was arrested, informed the police that he had been cheated of his share of the loot by his confederates, turned State's evidence, and was given a short sentence. His testimony before a grand jury caused the indictment of the others, whose identity he disclosed.

For months the police tried to uncover the trail of the men wanted, but never were able to get near them, though they heard occasionally that they had been in various cities.

In all of their wanderings the suspects used an expensive, high-powered car, in which they were said to have made their escape from New York, frequently changing its appearance by the use of new paint and other devices. Then one of the trio slipped away to Europe, leaving the others with the machine. Finally, however, the automobile became too worn and shaky for their purposes, and they determined to get a new one. Had they exercised the good sense they had shown in other matters, they would have burned or destroyed the ancient vehicle. But they didn't, despite the fact that they had an ample supply of funds. Instead they turned in the old car as part payment on a new one. After a time the detectives, sticking tenaciously to a faint trail they had uncovered, located the old car, and soon found the dealer who had taken it in trade. He supplied them with a complete description of the new automobile, and this was telegraphed to every service station of the company selling such cars. It was not long before a report was made from a station in New Jersey, and hastening there, the detectives captured their elusive quarry.

If the two much-wanted travelers had been less stingy and had been willing to sacrifice the few dollars the old machine was worth, the authorities might never have overtaken them.

And so "slip" cases might be cited indefinitely, including that of the Missouri murderer who was executed because, instead of destroying a pair of cheap shoes that had left a telltale mark for the police, he had them resoled and heeled to save a dollar or so.

It is probable that an exhaustive check-up of the records would show that more men and women have paid the penalty for their crimes because of overlooked trifles than ever were brought to book because of pronounced bungling.

Man To Man

By HAMILTON CRAIGIE

CHAPTER ONE

OFFICER FITZPATRICK, humming a tune, was turning the corner of Sixth avenue and little West Twelfth street, when a hurricane struck him all ways at once.

It had been a flawless fall day, and the policeman had had no warning at all of the impending tornado when, between two ticks of a watch, he found himself abruptly in the very vortex of a cursing tangle of swift motion. It was fists and flying arms, and the spang of automatics came like the buzzing of angry bees.

There had been a gang fight between the Twisters and the Clam Broths—a strictly private affair—until the abrupt arrival of Officer Fitzpatrick, alone and unsupported by reinforcements, but by this time minus his tune.

Fitzpatrick did not pause to ask the classic question, variously attributed to any number of celebrated heroes, "Is this a private fight, or can anybody join in?" Instead, disdaining even to draw his gun, club in hand, he hurled himself, muscle and mind and body, in one furious projectile, into and through the embattled mob, reckless of results.

For a big man Officer Fitzpatrick was like a cat for quickness; now, as it seemed, he appeared to be everywhere at once. Caught in a cross-fire between the contending factions, it seemed, too, for a moment, as if that droning death must reach him, with the high whine of the slugs. But in a moment the whirling play of the heavy club took toll.

A gangster's favorite weapons are a gun, a knife, a blackjack or a pair of brass knuckles, but it is not in him to stand against a club. To right and left, as the policeman's thudding blows got home on bone and flesh, they ran, cursing, scattered by the prowess of Fitzpatrick's arm until, facing him across the cobbles, but one remained.

Gun gone, lip lifting from his teeth like the snarl of an animal, the cop's lone antagonist faced him, defiant even before the club. And as words came, edged with an indomitable truculence, the officer saw and, seeing, swung up the club, laughing, but without mirth.

Young Jerry Donovan had been a decent lad enough; Fitzpatrick knew it. But excitement in one form or another had been the wine of life to Donovan from the time that he had been old enough to fight for his own with two very capable, hard fists. Later his only outlet had been the gang.

In the tenth of a second that his arm was raised to strike, Fitzpatrick heard and, hearing, grinned his cold grin; then, strangely, in the act of striking, he waited.

"Yah!" he heard the voice. "You dam' cop, you ain't got th' nerve! You drop that club an' fight it out wit' y'r fists, man t' man! I dare you! But you ain't got the nerve!"

Fitzpatrick grinned again; then with a sudden movement he turned, and the locust clattered to the cobbles. With guard held high, he fronted the gangster, who, eyes narrowed to slits, seemed for the moment at a loss.

The fall day was wearing on to evening, but there was still a good light to see by. All this had happened in perhaps thirty seconds of furious action. As yet the neighborhood, driven to cover by the gun fusillade, was silent. The gunmen, fearing the clang and rattle of the patrol, had scattered to the four winds, nor had there been as yet

evidence of the arrival of the minions of the law. Fitzpatrick, grinning his cold grin, sidestepped as the gangster, plunging in with right and left, was short, so that the policeman's counter, delivered with the full weight of his two hundred pounds of muscle behind it, caught him full on the point of his chin.

The gangster grunted, backing stiffly along the cobbles. A good six feet tall, his weight was nearly equal to Fitzpatrick's, and it appeared that he could take punishment. But the policeman, himself trained up from the streets, the alleys, had lived his life as an athlete lives it; he was always in the pink of condition. And something more than anger now nerved his arm with the thought that the man before him had had his chance and had chosen to pass it by. A scant year in the past he had been offered a place in the department, but he, the son of old "Sure Mike" Donovan, sergeant of detectives, had made his choice.

Snarling now, Young Donovan dove in as a wildcat leaps, teeth bared, timing his punch to beat that lightning straight left of his adversary. Whack! And then, flat on his back upon the cobbles, he was staring straight upward into the grim face of his conqueror, but, strangely enough, there was no malice in the policeman's gaze.

Getting stiffly to his feet, Jerry stood swaying a moment; then, at the sight of the handcuffs glinting in the sun, he recoiled with a twisted oath.

"Nix on the irons, Fitz!" he begged hoarsely, his face of a sudden a mottled, unhealthy gray. "I gotta reason! Nix! Fer ther love of Pete! I'll come, an' I'll come easy—only fer this once, not *them!*"

The patrolman bent upon Donovan a curious look, in a speculative, slow stare; there was a hardness in it and a something more.

"Ye'll come—the way I've a mind to take ye, Mister Big Man Donovan!" he stated, with a grim set to his hard mouth. But there was an odd, almost an understanding look in his eye. The gangster did not notice it as, turning with the word, they went forward along the cobbled street.

CHAPTER TWO

FARTHER along, on a side street facing the police station, Molly Harrison sat in the window of her tiny flat to view the sunset.

It might have been a trick of the sun and the lengthening shadows, but Molly's gaze was sombre as she leaned there in the window, behind her the gathering dusk of the quiet flat where presently she would sit down to supper with her mother. For there were but the two of them now, mother and daughter, since Patrolman Harrison had been brought home one bitter night two years in the past, the victim of a gunman's bullet. Molly was—had been—young Jerry Donovan's girl.

Molly Harrison was anything but "wild." She was a home girl in more senses than one, but she loved Jerry, and even, as she told herself, gangster as he was, she would marry him, unless——

But there was one thing she would not do; one thing at which she drew the line of her decision, and that:

"Niver marry a man to refor-rm him, Molly, me gurrul!" her mother had told her. "Niver doubt ut—it ain't done—ye'll niver do ut, I'm tellin' ye!"

And Molly, brooding in her window in the odorous dusk, thought it must, after all, be true.

But nevertheless she would marry Jerry; she would have a try at it, unless—— And Jerry, reckless, debonair, of an engaging manner with women, had averted the hard staring in his light-blue eyes as she said with an unforgettable emphasis:

"Jerry Donovan, I've stood a lot from you, but there's one thing I won't stand. If I ever see you under arrest, with the handcuffs on you, then, Jerry Donovan, it'll be all off, and there'll be no turning back!"

Molly had been patient. She had tolerated him even while she loathed his association with the gangs, hoping against hope that this would prove but a passing phase in Donovan's activities. But the handcuffs—they would be a symbol, sharply marking the difference between just wildness and outright defiance of the law. For to her

they would be the accolade of a doubtful knighthood, the sign-manual of the crook.

Leaning in the window, Molly abruptly stiffened; then, her breath sucked in sharply through set teeth, she looked, then looked again, and a sound that was half a sob escaped her; a cry that was half anger, half-despairing wail.

For, etched clear against the red glow of the setting sun, she saw them; the officer and the man who walked at his side, heavily, with lagging step and slow. And there, between them, welding them together in that grim fellowship of the lawless and the law, plain for all to see, as Fitzpatrick and his prisoner passed onward, she saw the handcuffs glinting in the sun.

CHAPTER THREE

AGAIN Officer Fitzpatrick passed slowly along his beat. A year had gone since that fall evening in '22 when he had put the darbies on Jerry Donovan. By so doing he had severed, for all time, that other link between the gangster and the girl.

He frowned now in recollection, the ghost of that grim, brooding smile about his mouth, as in fancy he was hearing again the words of Molly, seeing her face, mutinous, white with anger:

"Well, you've done it—and I'd have married him, only—I'd given my word! And now he'll be a crook, a jail-bird, for the rest of his life, and he might have been—a man! You—you haven't any *heart;* it—it's just a muscle, and my father the best friend you ever had, Timothy Fitzpatrick! Well, I never want to speak to you again!"

The violet eyes had matched the blue ice of his, only, as a matter of fact, there had been a glow beneath the ice, deep down, like a still fire. The girl had missed it; well, that would be the way of the young.

Now, as the patrolman went forward, again there came that mirthless gleaming in the pale-blue eyes, like the sun on water, and with it, for a moment, a quasi-humorous, semi-sardonic lifting of the lip.

These children—well, and even if some said that he, Fitzpatrick, was cold, that he had had it in for Donovan, who was there to prove it? And for the matter of that, he *had* had it in for him, the reckless young omadhoun, the scapegrace ne'er-do-well, the wastrel son of a clean, upstanding father! Fitzpatrick had had it in for him indeed, but in a way that nobody, least of all Donovan himself, would ever suspect.

And now, a long year from that fall day in the past, cold of eye, walking lightly for all his twenty years' hard service in the highways and byways of criminopolis, again his mouth tightened on a bitter, brooding curve, walked Fitzpatrick.

He had loved Molly Harrison—yes, but he had never spoken of it. If he had hoped to profit by that deliberate showing-up of the gangster who might have been a man, that hope had long since passed, even as the summer was passing, dying with the hiss and scurry of the dead leaves whirling upward to the bleak October sky.

For Donovan, on that fall evening in the past, had begged and pleaded, told the policeman of Molly's threat, asked for his chance, and he had not given it to him; so it would be remembered.

Pausing idly at the corner of the street, Fitzpatrick's gaze for a moment rested on a gaudy poster—the Departmental Ball, advertised in staring crimson. Three-sheeted against a dead wall just across the street, it stood out against the bleak background of the houses. And Molly would be there!

Ahead of him, down the short, deserted street, a figure was approaching him with swift, silent strides, pantherish almost, in the stealthy advance. Even at that distance Fitzpatrick could see the black, arching brows, the scowl, and then the sudden flash in the gray-green eyes as Donovan, with a short half block between them, saw the patrolman where he stood.

At this time of the day there was little traffic in the street. Fitzpatrick, with his hand reaching backward toward his pocket, halted in midstride as the quick-coming figure, moving as a cat moves, soundless and sure, came on, almost at a run.

And then, as the two men met, the younger spoke:

"Fitzpatrick, I've been looking for you. Now——"

His hand, in the pocket of his coat, came away—to thrust under the policeman's nose a sheaf of pasteboards, yellow and red. Tickets!

"If you haven't got yours yet, Fitz, I've got a-plenty. Sure, me an' the missus'll be there—with bells. The grand march—sure, but maybe, if you're real good, we—Molly an' me—we'll let you have one dance. Well, so long; I gotta work fast."

Then he turned. His hand flashed upward in a brief salute. As Officer Donovan, the gangster that was, had the sunlight winking on his brass buttons, with head erect, he passed onward, swinging his club.

Behind him stood the man who had made him what he had become, with kindness aforethought. Fitzpatrick was the man who had counted upon the first touch of manacles' cold steel to turn Jerry from his course. The girl in the window gazed meditatively after the son of old Sure Mike Donovan hastening to his hearth.

For, following that manacled parade beneath Molly's window, Fitzpatrick, in the shadow of the green lights of the station, had spoken, short and to the point. He unlocked the cuffs then and had given the boy his chance, exacted secrecy and a promise sealed with a slow, wrenching hand-grip, as from man to man.

And now, a year following that day that had been an end and a beginning, Fitzpatrick, his sombre gaze upon that lessening figure in its brass buttons and peaked cap, smiled beneath his tawny-colored mustache.

IRISH DETECTIVES TRAIL A BRITISHER

A MAN dressed like an Englishman, who said he was George Curry, a captain in the British army during the war, and another who described himself as George Gart, a salesman, were arrested recently by Detectives Donohue and Brannigan in a former saloon in 125th street, near Amsterdam avenue.

They are accused of having $18,000 worth of jewels which the police say are part of the $35,000 worth of platinum and diamond rings, stickpins and bracelets stolen when the safe in Bernard Klein's jewelry shop at 1384 Fifth avenue was blown Sunday, August 5.

The two detectives were standing at 125th street and Eighth avenue when Curry and Gart came out of the Hotel Colonial, where Curry afterward said he had been living since his arrival here from England three months ago. Curry's exaggerated English clothes at once attracted the attention of the detectives, as did a small steel box which he carried.

The detectives remembered that complaints had been received against two men answering the description of the pair for working the "switch" game and that in one instance the police received a report that a merchant had been mulcted of $2,000, when a steel box containing jewelry had been replaced by one containing bolts after he had bought it.

Curry and Gart started down the street with Donohue and Brannigan following. The men knew they were being followed the detectives soon found out, and for three hours they twisted and turned through the streets of Harlem, finally entering the saloon near Amsterdam avenue. Curry was seated at a table in the back room when the detectives entered. The steel box was open before him and a man who said he was Samuel Feinberg, was looking at the jewels.

Curry refused to tell the police how he came by the jewels or to say anything beyond "It's none of your business" in answer to all questions. Klein was out of town at the time and had not identified the jewelry in Curry's possession as his. The prisoners will be arraigned in the Washington Heights Court.

The Curse of Nadir

By EDWIN A. GOEWEY

PART TWO

"A LONG time ago," said Count Borolsky to Stanley and Harrison, "the Orloff diamond was stolen from a temple and the robbers murdered a Hindu priest, Nadir-Mir, its special guardian. With his dying breath he cursed the stone, and that curse has carried through the years which followed. The gem came into the possession of the Great Catherine at the height of her career of profligacy, and not long before she died. You are familiar with what happened to the late Czar and his family following the insurrection, a curse worse than that breathed by the dying Hindu. Ivan Platoff is the latest to pass away with the gem in his possession, and none can foresee who will be the next.

"Some of us Russians, who were close to the emperor, saw the approach of the inevitable, and with his permission managed to smuggle many of the crown gems from the country, including the big Orloff. It was taken from its setting, a pendant gold and platinum reliquary often worn by the empress, and entrusted to me. I managed to bring it safely to this city, and after the necessary bonds were furnished to the customs officials it was kept in a safety vault. Recently a man named Lapuschin, formerly a secret service agent of the Russian government, recovered the setting in France, brought it here and turned it over to us. He has kept in seclusion since, but in the near future we intend to send him to Russia to aid in the campaign we now are conducting for the overflow of the Bolshevists. It was the desire of my conferees and myself to see the gem returned to its original setting, and it was taken to Ivan for that purpose. He and others of his family held posts of trust under the monarchy, but before that he was an experienced goldsmith and jeweler and was fully competent to do the work we desired."

"But wasn't he afraid to work on anything so valuable in his shop?" asked Norwood Stanley.

"The gem never left his safe except at night, and then he did his work in the room behind the shop in which there are no windows. Last night he completed the job of repairing the reliquary, which was damaged considerably by the thieves who stole it and sold it in France. I took the setting from the shop this morning, when I saw Ivan, intending to show it to my associates this evening, and then return it to have the gem inserted. We placed too much faith in our belief that none but those who could be trusted knew that the Orloff was in America. Now it is too late to take precautions. The diamond will never be returned to its setting."

"Where is the setting now?"

"Here," replied the count, unlocking a secret drawer in his desk and drawing forth a most wonderful example of the jewelers' art, so unusual in workmanship and design that both Stanley and Detective Harrison examined it in wonderment.

"Please describe this Lapuschin for us," said Stanley.

"He was short and stocky, with cropped black hair and smooth face."

The visitors started at the words "short and stocky," but their faces fell at the further description.

"But there is something else by which he can be identified, and it has handicapped

him somewhat in his work as a spy. The first finger of his right hand is gone."

The listeners started from their chairs at the announcement.

"Count Borolsky," said Stanley earnestly, "a man answering the description of Lapuschin, except that he had a beard and longer hair, has been in Ivan's shop frequently of late, representing himself as a small merchant. He was there this morning."

For a time the Russian was too amazed to speak. Then he cried:

"So our spy has turned against us and has become a thief, has he?"

"Perhaps. If so, the question is: Did he act for himself, or was he but the confederate of an abler principal? You evidently were followed, and the frequency with which you visited the shop led some one to believe that something valuable was kept there. Despite all precautions, Ivan may have been watched at night when the gem was taken from the safe. Lapuschin obviously has let his hair and beard grow since you last saw him, thereby providing himself with a natural disguise. He frequented the shop in the daytime, noted that the safe often was left open and waited a favorable opportunity when the old man was alone to commit the theft."

"Your reasoning is sound. Neither I nor my associates have communicated with him, except by telephone, for some time. However, I fear the gem is gone forever. He is clever, has been all over the world, and will have no difficulty in finding a safe hiding-place for the diamond."

"Well, we're going after him just the same," said Stanley. "My hope is that we shall catch him before he learns that he is suspected. Let me have the last address he gave you. I have no doubt he has left there, but it will serve as a starting point."

Borolsky gave the desired information and also the name the spy assumed after reaching America. The count stated that he would at once turn loose his agents to hunt the man, and arrangements were made for quick communication in the event that Lapuschin was discovered.

Hastening to the address furnished by Borolsky, Stanley and Harrison learned that he had left there days before and that his whereabouts was unknown.

"Do you suppose the count is in on this and lied when he said that he didn't know where Lapuschin was hiding?" queried the detective. "I am as much in the dark as you. He gave one the impression of being frank, but I am not overlooking the significant facts that he lived in India and that he was the only person, besides Ivan and Ora, whom we know was familiar with the fact that the gem was in the safe in the shop. But if he is the murderer, he is too clever to betray himself, unless we have something concrete with which to confront him. It is possible that he and Lapuschin worked together. You assign men to trail Borolsky night and day and devote your time to locating this spy. I will have all the ports watched and follow some other leads, about which we will talk later. You know how to reach me at short notice, and I will keep in touch with you at the station."

And so they parted, each to his appointed task.

Three days later Stanley was summoned to the telephone by the detective.

"Come as fast as you can to No. 73 ——— street," said Harrison. "It is too important to talk about over the telephone."

Stanley made the requisite speed, his own car taking him to the designated place, a dingy tenement in the Russian quarter, in twenty minutes. The detective, standing in the doorway, beckoned the other to follow, and led him to a rear room on the top floor, where a policeman stood guard at the door. Entering, Stanley saw a human figure covered with a sheet on a bed in a corner.

"I have kept in touch with headquarters ever since I left you," said Harrison, "and when I heard of this death in the Russian quarter I made a bee-line here. Look!"

He threw back the sheet and disclosed the body of a short, stocky man, with black hair and beard. Stanley started, then looked at the right hand. The first finger was missing.

"Lapuschin," he said.

"That was my guess," said Harrison. "Look at these papers I found hidden be-

hind that picture. They may tell something."

Stanley took the documents, all in Russian, and read a few lines.

"It's Lapuschin, all right," he said. They contain instructions to Dimitri Orlofsky, the name the count said the spy was using."

"I'll admit that I am good, for once," said Harrison, with a ring of pride in his tones. "But do you see anything else suspicious?"

"Yes," replied Stanley. "I have been studying the body closely." Then he turned the man upon his face and looked for a wound at the base of the brain, concealed by the hair. It was there.

"What's the answer?" questioned the detective.

"Part of it is obvious. He was killed by the same hand that murdered Ivan. We had three descriptions of him, but Ora's was correct. I wonder if Borolsky tried to deceive us when he stated that Lapuschin had a smooth face, or whether this fellow raised a beard as a disguise, the better to avoid recognition by those who used to know him. In any event some person who played a leading rôle in the murder and robbery so feared this man that he put him out of the way forever."

"And everything points to Borolsky as the big criminal. I think it is about time we put him where he will do no more harm."

"We can't arrest him—now," said Stanley. "I'll admit that things look bad for him, but we can't convict him on our suspicions alone. Besides, his arrest would block every chance of getting hold of the gem. Lapuschin's death, no doubt, will be attributed to natural causes, as was Ivan's. Let it rest that way for the present. If no alarm is raised we still have a chance to get the master criminal."

"Will you tell the count of Lapuschin's death?"

"Yes," replied Stanley, "I shall tell him that the curse of the old Hindu has descended upon another victim."

The following day Harrison met Stanley by appointment and found the latter less composed than usual.

"As time goes on, Harrison," he said, "I am becoming more convinced that the missing diamond is still somewhere in the building where the shop is located. Anyway, I am going to make one more try for it there, and at the same time I may succeed in disclosing the identity of the murderer. I will have you and Borolsky at the shop on Thursday night, and then I will play every trump which I hold. We shall tear the place to pieces if necessary for the purposes of our search. I will make the count assist us, and, even though his nerves are of steel, I don't believe he will be able to control himself throughout an entire night at the scene of the crime—if he is the slayer."

With a few additional instructions the detective and Stanley parted, the latter to consult Ora and make preparations for the climax to the adventure.

Stanley and Ora were the first to reach the deserted shop on the evening when the place was to be ransacked on the chance that the missing gem was hidden there. Stanley dismissed one of his associates on guard at the door. The ghost-like shadows set the girl to trembling as they crossed the threshold, and she clung to him until he switched on the lights.

"I am sorry you insisted upon coming," he said. "There can be nothing but painful memories for you here."

"I could not remain away. I am as anxious as you are to learn the truth."

"But you must keep your promise and leave us alone until we have something to report. It would cause you unnecessary grief to watch while we overturned your father's treasured possessions."

She nodded and pressed his hand.

"I understand," she replied. "I shall wait patiently for you, but I will pray that the diamond will be found. I would give anything to terminate the suspense and suspicion which has followed that accursed stone. Oh, how I wish we never had seen the awful thing."

Then she ascended the narrow stairway leading from the rear room to the floor above, the eyrie of her happier dream days, and closed the door.

Stanley instantly became the embodiment of nervous action. With quick but silent steps he passed from the shop to the tiny

storeroom at the side, and then into the rear room, glancing hurriedly over everything. Satisfied that things were as he had last seen them, he paced the floor impatiently, waiting for the others to arrive. His vigil was brief, for Harrison appeared promptly at eight and Count Borolsky a few minutes later.

Leading the way to the rear room, Stanley motioned them to chairs and said:

"I have asked you here to-night to help me in a delicate investigation which may lead to the discovery of the missing Orloff and the identity of Ivan's slayer. It is possible that the murderer, fearful of being stopped when he left the shop, did not take the gem with him, but hid it here, intending to return and get it when the coast was clear. If that was his scheme I frustrated it, for some of my assistants have been on guard here day and night ever since the body was removed, and the police were in the shop constantly up to that time."

"Then you really think that the diamond may be hidden here?" asked Borolsky.

"I don't know, but there is a chance. We shall make a try for it at any rate, and the search will be thorough if we have to tear up the floors. It may take hours."

"We'll help you, all right," said Harrison, removing his coat.

"I need your assistance, but, frankly, I also want you as witnesses. Count Borolsky, who stood sponsor for the stone, must report the result of our search to his confreres. They do not know me as you do, and for that reason you must remain and note everything that takes place. A lone searcher would be sure to be suspected if he reported that he found nothing."

"I appreciate your point," said Borolsky. "You can count upon me for any help you may require, and I am willing to search all night if necessary."

"It is possible that we may have to, but I have arranged to make things as comfortable as possible in the circumstances. I saw the janitor, Joe, this afternoon, and arranged for the mulatto to bring us coffee and food at eleven. I explained that we intended to work here until quite late, and a liberal tip placed him at our service for the evening."

"Where shall we begin?" asked Harrison.

"First, the safe, then the shop, and afterward in here. We can leave the storeroom till last, for it appears to contain only unpacked goods and rubbish. I obtained the combination of the safe from Ora this morning."

The three at once applied themselves diligently to their task, and with infinite care explored the safe, scrutinizing its every nook and cranny with the aid of powerful pocket lights. It failed to yield the missing gem.

Next they turned their attention to the shelves, with their miscellaneous array of articles, ranging from porcelain and handwrought ornaments of the finest workmanship to cheap trinkets for the passing trade.

Hour after hour they hunted inverted vases and other receptacles, opened and examined caskets and boxes, and peered into every corner that even hinted a possible hiding-place. Thus engaged, they lost all track of time, and were somewhat startled when interrupted by a rap upon the outer door.

Stanley opened it and admitted the janitor bearing a huge tray piled high with food procured from a near-by restaurant. Then he closed and locked the door.

Motioning the man toward the rear room, Stanley and the others followed, ready to partake of the needed refreshment. About the great table they ranged themselves, Joe placing the dishes and uncovering the food.

Suddenly Stanley, who sat facing the door, leaped to his feet, and with trembling hand pointed toward the shop.

"My God! What's that?" he gasped.

As he spoke all the lights went out, and in the centre of the room beyond the startled onlookers beheld a ghost-like, greenish cloud which, for a time, drifted aimlessly higher and yon, but steadily grew in size. Then there was a burst of flame, and thereafter the stunned and speechless watchers noted that much of the space in the shop was revealed in a steady though diffused light, which appeared to come from no particular point, but held firm in a wall of densest shadows.

With frightened eyes they watched, fascinated. Then they uttered low cries of horror, for there, in the centre of the ghastly illumination, suddenly appeared the figure of Ivan Platoff, dozing in his chair. Out of the blackness near the door stealthily crept a man, who kept himself in the shadows so that his features were little more than a blur. Slowly, silently, like a panther approaching his prey, he crept behind the old man. There he paused. He raised his right hand, in which something glistened. Inch by inch he moved his hand nearer the head of the sleeper. There was a lightning-like movement, and the glistening instrument struck true at the base of the brain. Ivan gave a fearful shudder and attempted to rise. Then he fell back limp and died.

Quickly the killer snatched a newspaper from the shadows, forced it into the stiffening fingers of the old man, and then turned and started toward the rear room, his teeth bared in a sardonic grin, but his other features still indefinite.

With forced and labored breathing the watchers noted the approach of the malevolent apparition. Nearer and nearer he came, growing in stature with each step. At the threshold he paused and reached ahead with his clawlike fingers.

From among the watchers there came the shriek of a man in mortal dread—a cry that almost froze the blood in the veins. But ere its echoes died away there was a crash, then oaths and the sound of blows reaching home.

Instantly Stanley touched a switch, flooding the room with brilliant illumination and showing, at the foot of the stairway, the detective battling for his life against a man fighting with maniacal fury—the janitor, Joe.

Stanley leaped upon them, and hurling the negro to the floor, he twisted his wrists until the hands met in front, and Harrison clasped them firm in steel cuffs.

"Well, I'll be damned," gasped the detective as he wiped his bleeding face and flashed a glance at Borolsky.

"So it was you, Joe," said Stanley with satisfaction. "Now, you Hindu rat, tell us where you have hidden the diamond for which you killed a man who never harmed a living soul."

The dark-skinned janitor pulled himself to his feet and stood erect, his head thrown back and an ironic smile twisting his features. All in the room were too occupied to note Ora, who, with blanched face and trembling limbs, stood in the doorway above, staring in with wondering eyes.

"You will regret this," snarled the prisoner. "I do not understand the reason for your gruesome trickery, but I demand that you release me instantly."

"Search him," commanded Stanley.

Instantly the expression of the Hindu's face changed to that of a demon, his eyes flashed hate and, springing at the detective, he raised his manacled hands and struck wildly. Stanley and Harrison were upon him in a flash, and though he struggled with the fury of one crazed, they bore him to the floor, the shriek of the girl being drowned by the crash of the fall.

With the detective holding the man impotent, and Ora and Borolsky standing by and watching the terrific drama, Stanley went through the pockets of the man and then tore away his clothing, revealing a belt about his waist next the skin.

Again the prisoner, cursing and raging, struggled to rise, but was prevented by the detective and Borolsky, while Stanley cut away the belt and tore it open.

There were passports, steamship tickets and gold—and something sewed in a chamois covering. As he grasped it Stanley gave a shout of triumph and, tearing the casing away, exposed the green Orloff, white and perfect, as it flashed in the light—a pure and radiant gem, though the symbol of lust and tragedy.

Then, for the first time, Stanley saw the girl, crouched against the stair rail, panting and on the verge of collapse.

"In heaven's name, Stanley, what does all this mean?" she cried.

"You should not have left your room," he replied gently as he placed his arm about her. "This is no place for you. Please go back."

"No, I cannot till I know the meaning

of all this—the diamond, that man a prisoner."

"That man is the thief who stole the diamond. He killed your father to gain possession of it."

Ora recoiled in horror.

"Please let me take you to your room," he said.

"No, I shall remain. Surely I am entitled to know all. You will find that I can be brave."

Stanley bowed and placed her in a chair.

The prisoner, who had been cringing in a corner, was assisted to rise by Harrison.

As his bloodshot eyes encountered the steady gaze of Stanley he flashed back a look of hate.

"You devil, you persistent devil," he muttered with a sob that was at the same time an oath. Then he turned his head away.

"Before this man is locked up," said Stanley, "I will explain the circumstances leading up to what occurred here. From you, Count Borolsky, I crave a pardon, for until I used that ghostly counterfeit of the murder to bring about the climax which you witnessed, you were as much a suspect as that cringing wretch."

The nobleman's eyes opened wide in amazement.

"I don't understand," he faltered.

"When Ora first told me that the diamond had been stolen I was certain that there had been foul play," Stanley resumed. "Harrison knows how I established the murder and learned that the crime was committed with a poison used by the Hindus. Then I learned that you, count, had been in the shop, apparently seen by no one but Ivan, and that soon after your departure my friend was found dead and the gem missing. When on the heels of this I was informed that you had spent years in India and were familiar with Hindu customs, I naturally became suspicious. With none to accuse, the possession of the Orloff would have meant wealth that would have required no explanations. And the best of us are subject to temptation.

"Next came the killing of Lapuschin, with whom you had been associated and who probably learned of the presence of the diamond here through that association. He and Ivan were killed with the same poison. Harrison and I debated whether he had been a confederate in the crime and you, desiring to silence him forever, slew him."

Borolsky turned pale at the recital of the circumstances which had massed themselves against him.

"But to offset these things," continued Stanley, "there were clues which I determined to follow alone. The first was a bit of cloth which I found caught in the arm of Ivan's chair. I thought possibly that it might have been torn loose there when the murderer stooped to adjust the newspaper, and later I discovered it matched the material of the overalls worn by the janitor. However, establishing the latter fact was not conclusive, for the man was frequently in the shop, and the bit of cloth might have clung to the chair for weeks. But he made matters worse for himself when he gave an incorrect description of Lapuschin, for I felt that he must be lying deliberately, since he was able to describe the count perfectly.

"But this was not sufficient to warrant me in taking action, and the murder of Lapuschin again swung the pendulum of suspicion toward the count. But never, even for an instant, did I permit this janitor to get out of the sight of either myself or one of my men, and in looking up his record I learned that, though he represented himself as an East Indian when he came to work here, he never mingled with negroes. I searched his room on more than one occasion, but found nothing suspicious except a number of books not usually read by men in menial posts. Three days ago I trailed him to a steamship office, learned that he had purchased passage for England, and that his passports gave his name as Akbar Ghaz and his native land as India. This again brought him to the fore as a suspect, and I determined to at once resort to drastic measures to determine whether he or the count was the slayer."

"And you directed that terrible scene in the shop?" asked Borolsky.

"Yes."

"In the name of all that's wonderful, how did you do it?"

"It was a motion picture with two characters made up to resemble Ivan and the janitor. Originally it was staged in my rooms. I felt certain that the murderer would be here to-night. I was equally confident that he would attempt to escape when the picture showed the manner in which the murder was committed. Harrison, as I had directed, took his place at the foot of the stairway. It was the only exit from here except the shop door, and I took pains to see that all knew that it was locked. One of my men projected the picture through a hole cut in the storeroom wall upon a screen covering the safe. The glow came from some studio bunch lights. Now you understand why I did not want you to enter the storeroom.

"That is all. Now, Akbar, you are going to pay the white man's penalty for your crime. You were resourceful, but you failed. The law will demand its price."

The Hindu, who had listened fascinated through the recital, bowed to his captors.

"I have been caught," he said, "and I know the fate that awaits me. But before I leave you I want to protest that I am no common thief, that I did not kill for personal gain."

"I don't understand you," said Stanley.

"I am a true Hindu, a believer in the faith of my fathers. Many years ago this diamond was stolen from a Brahmin temple by white-skinned looters, and Nadir-Mir, the high priest, its guardian, was murdered by the plunderers. From each generation since men from among our best scholars have been chosen to try and recover this treasure. We labored only for the honor of our religion to recover that which was ours by right. In the matter of worldly wealth my family possesses more than all of you together. I spent years in England and Russia learning the language and customs that I might be the better equipped to continue the mission to which I had been delegated.

"Though we knew that the stolen gem was originally taken to Russia, where it became one of the treasured possessions of the crown, we had been informed that, following the insurrection, it was purchased by some one in England. I failed to locate it in London, but was able to trace it to America—and you know the rest."

"But how did you learn that it had been brought to the United States, that it was in this shop?" asked Stanley.

"That I cannot tell you. It would involve others."

"But Lapuschin was your accomplice? You killed him?"

"Yes. He and I were in the Russian secret service together. He helped me to recover the gem, and I was to pay him liberally when we reached India. But he became avaricious. He urged to sell the diamond and divide the proceeds. I refused. He threatened. There was but one way. I removed him."

Ora had listened throughout as though hypnotized, but at the completion of the confession she buried her face in her hands and wept softly.

"Take him away," ordered Stanley with a nod to Harrison.

"Wait a moment," said the Hindu as he stepped to the centre of the room. "To each man according to his lights. Akbar Ghaz still is a man. And he will die like a man and not like a felon."

With a smile of triumph he flung out his arms and pressed together his encircled wrists.

Stanley comprehended and leaped toward the prisoner, but the latter stepped aside, laughed derisively and dropped into a chair.

"Too late," he said, and a quiver shot through his body and his limbs stiffened.

"What is it?" asked the amazed detective.

"That thing," replied Stanley, pointing to a gold circlet on Akbar's finger. "It is a poison ring. When he pressed his hands together he released a spring which shot the venom into his palm. He is beyond help."

Stanley stepped before the girl as the Hindu pulled himself to his feet, a trace of haughtiness in his pose. He raised his head, bared his teeth in a sardonic smile, passed his twitching fingers across his eyes—and died.

"Again the curse of Nadir," muttered Borolsky.

Peter's Pretty Play

By ROBERT RUSSELL

CHAPTER ONE

IT was a plain little office, and the name on the glass of the door had nothing fancy about it. "Peter Dunn, Detective," read that inscription, which might well have fitted the man walking up and down the floor of the small room. Evidently he was deep in thought, as many detectives frequently are, for his step was slow, his sharp eyes half-closed and his forehead heavily lined.

Once he seated himself at the plain table and picked up a pen, drawing a sheet of paper toward him as though he would write. The pen, dipped in the inkwell, came up dry. He threw it from him in thoughtful impatience, then turned to the typewriter which stood at his right, paper inserted in it, ready for operation.

Slowly he began to write, picking out the letters as one does who is not in the habit of using the machine, or as one who has difficulty in choosing the exact words he wishes to use. Evidently the communication he was writing was of considerable importance, for his eyes narrowed and the furrows on his brow deepened as he bent over the machine.

Outside the closed door, in the public hallway, there were hurried steps, the knob rattled, the door opened, and a man stepped quickly inside, closing the door behind him and leaning back against it. He was a little man, nervous, exhausted by emotion and hurry.

The quiet man looked up at his caller, evidently giving him all his attention, at the same time drawing the paper upon which he had been writing from the typewriter. His eyes, however, never left the face of the excited person standing in front of the door, even as he stuffed the bit of paper in his pocket.

"Can I employ you for just one night," the newcomer asked, "to guard a large sum of money? There is my card," and he tossed a bit of pasteboard on the table as he went on excitedly. "And there is no time to lose. I will explain the circumstances to you as we go to my home."

"I will go with you at once."

"As you can see by the card my name is Philip Gray," interposed the nervous little man. "And do hurry, Mr. Dunn."

The quiet man rose, took his hat from a chair where it was lying, and moved to the door. Together they passed out and down the long hall into the elevator and thence to the street.

"Perhaps I am unnecessarily excited and worried," Gray remarked, "and perhaps I should have gone to the regular police, but I imagine headquarters will not detail a policeman to sleep in a man's house just to guard $50,000, and, of course, the banks are all closed by this time."

"It is not unusual," replied Dunn, "for people to come to me for just that purpose. It will be a simple matter. Pray do not be worried, if that is all you want of me."

"I am a peculiar man, Mr. Dunn," the other went on as the taxi in which they were riding made its way through the crowded streets. "I have had the habit of keeping my savings in my own home. I distrust banks, like many other old-fashioned people. Just a little while ago I read in one of the afternoon papers of the robbery of a man who has been doing just what I have—keeping his money at home in various hidden places. I confess that I became frightened. My brother happened to be in the house. He and my wife and I talked the

matter over, and we decided that I had better run no more risks. My brother leaves the city to-night, and we have no male servants. He is at my home now, guarding the house. I want you to stay until morning, when I shall deposit the money in a bank and stop my foolish practice of taking such risks."

"You did wisely to come to me," was the other's comment as they drew up in front of a modest house in the seventies and the little man hastily opened the door of the taxi.

Mrs. Gray, who met them at the door, was a handsome young woman, many years her husband's junior, who evidently did not share Gray's anxiety. She smiled graciously as she introduced her husband's brother, who joined them presently, and Dunn could not fail to be impressed by the picture the wife and the brother made as they stood in the hall side by side. They were far more the ideal couple than were Mrs. Gray and her small, elderly husband. Harris Gray could not, or did not, try to conceal his admiration for his brother's wife, and in his treatment of his brother there was a shade of patronage to which the wife did not seem to take offense.

Together they went to Philip Gray's room, where the money which was causing its owner such anxiety was hidden. The detective who was hired to guard the treasure after the brother's departure noted the money's hiding-places carefully, and gave orders just where the couch he was to occupy that night should be placed, so that the repository of the money could be within his range of vision. Dunn's couch was in an alcove, which adjoined the bedroom of Philip Gray.

The evening meal was a quiet one, marked by anxious silence on the part of Gray, modest reticence on the part of the detective, and evidences of boredoom in the attitude of Mrs. Gray, who had scarcely spoken since taking leave of the brother. She left the others early and retired to her room with a headache, and the two men shortly thereafter went to Gray's room, where, after a last look to see that the treasure was safe, they both retired. The detective laughingly protested that he was accustomed to sleeping "with his boots on," but finally consented to make use of his employer's night garments, which did not make him any more comfortable, as they were several sizes too small for him.

That night the dreams of Philip Gray, the nervous possessor of $50,000, were filled with pictures of battle, murder and sudden death. For hours he lay tossing restlessly, but when sleep did come it was the sleep of mental and physical exhaustion. He lay dead to all reality until the early morning sun streamed in at his windows.

He leaped from his bed with nervous haste and darted across the room to the farthest corner, where a portion of his money was hidden. Then he opened the secret drawer in the desk.

And his hand, reaching, grasping, found nothing.

With a cry of horror Gray dropped to knees, groping, peering, and he yelled to the detective, who had retired in the alcove. But he did not wait for Dunn. From the desk he rushed to where another part of the $50,000 had been placed beneath a false bottom in a table by a window. Again came his cry of dismay; again a rapid rush across the floor to the third hiding-place beneath his bed.

It was not until he had convinced himself that all the $50,000 was gone that he staggered into the alcove to awaken the man who had proven such a poor guardian of his treasure.

But again dismay overcame him. There stood the couch in which the detective had retired, but, like the secret places where the money had been hidden, the couch was empty.

Gray clung to a curtain for support; his head reeled. For a moment everything went black before him and his senses refused to work. Money to him had meant everything. He could not bear to have what he owned out of his possession. It had been his constant companion, and it was only after a severe struggle with himself that he had determined, the day before, to put it in a bank, where his friends convinced him it would be safer.

Now it was gone, and so was the man he had hired to guard it. Why had he not gone to the police instead of calling on a man whom he had never seen before. He cursed the day he hired Dunn. The detective he suspected had been tempted beyond his powers of resistance, and had robbed him under his very eyes.

Gray's mind began to clear, and he looked about for some evidence, some clue by which he could trace the thief who had robbed him. Of course he could go to Dunn's office, but did not expect to find him there. Peter Dunn, he figured, would keep clear of New York City for many years to come; that was certain.

As Gray stood by the couch uncertain what to do, his eyes presently lighted on a little slip of paper pinned to the pillow that the detective had used. He darted forward and grasped it eagerly, reading the words written on it at a glance:

"Do not call the police. I am on the track of the man who robbed you. Give me two days to get him."

The note was signed "Dunn" and, for the moment, brought tremendous relief to Gray.

And yet—two days! Could he stand the suspense?

Clutching the note in his hand and throwing on a heavy bath-robe, he strode from his room, down the hall, and into the apartment where his wife slept.

"Marguerite," he began tremulously, "I hate to disturb you, but——"

He stopped short. For a moment he swayed, uncertain, peering at the bed as though he could not believe his eyes.

For it was unoccupied. Moreover, there were no signs of its having been used. A great numbness came to Philip Gray as he stood there glaring, his brain seething with awful fancies. Like the Merchant of Venice, his heart cried out, "My money, my wife," for, to Gray, the money came first.

Gray was inclined to believe that Dunn would return with a prisoner and the money before the two days set by him had elapsed. But now, with this new complication staring him in the face, all hope left the man, and he ran downstairs like a madman, trying to formulate some plan of action.

He stopped on the lower floor just long enough to tell the housekeeper of the robbery and disappearance of his wife before he dashed out of the house, headed for that resort of all in trouble—police headquarters.

CHAPTER TWO

WITHIN a stone's throw of police headquarters there is a little restaurant, the approach to which is a few steps down a long passage, and across a small courtyard. It is well known to the police, who seldom have cause to molest the persons who frequent the place, but occasionally members of the detective force drop in, searching for information as to the whereabouts of some person whose photograph is in the Rogues' Gallery.

A photograph of the quiet, thoughtful Peter Dunn, who had guarded Philip Gray's $50,000 the night before, was not in the Rogues' Gallery, of course. But some two hours after Gray arrived at headquarters with his disconnected story of the loss of his money and disappearance of his wife the detective was at the restaurant in person.

By his side on the floor stood a suit-case, and in front of him, across the table, was a young woman, to whom he was speaking earnestly and to whom he listened with the same intensity.

"Really, Jen," he was saying, "there is not the slightest danger for me. There is absolutely no way to connect me with the matter at all. The only reason for my stopping operations in New York is that I would like to travel, and, of course, I want you, my wife, to go with me. Isn't that a natural thing for a husband to want?"

"You've got two days to catch the man who stole Gray's fifty thousand," she cooed. "So you came to look for him here, didn't you?" She laughed as though there were some humorous point to her remark, but the serious face of the quiet man did not change.

"And you know," he replied, "that I can get him if any one could. This would be a likely place for him to keep away from if the dicks had any idea who he was. And I do like to beat the dicks."

Although the man's face retained its serious look, the girl's amusement at their conversation did not abate.

"And to think," she went on, "I'm really married to a detective—me, Jen Greggs. I wonder if I'll disgrace you?"

"I'll take chances," returned the man, sipping a glass into which he had poured something from a small flask he carried. "But there is no use waiting any longer, Jen," he added seriously. "Let's go. Don't stop to pack a bag. It'll be time enough when we get to Philadelphia, and we won't have to be economical about your wardrobe when we get there."

"Sort of temptin'," mused the girl. She was silent a few minutes under the spell of the grave man's eyes, but the hesitation did not last long. "Righto," she cried gaily after she, too, had drained a glass. Let's be on our way, Peter Dunn; I'm for you."

They rose, the man picking up the suitcase and following her out of the place, over the courtyard, through the long passage, and up to the street. For just a moment they paused at the top of the steps, looking, as if by common accord, in the direction of police headquarters.

Thus, just for an instant, they were lost in a contemplation of all that that building meant to them. And it was at this moment that two men stepped into view, one from the shelter of a doorway, the other from behind a signboard. They laid their strong hands on a shoulder of each of the crooks.

"There'll be no traveling for you today, my friend," said one to Dunn. "And you, Jen, will have to come along, too."

"You've got nothin' on me," she cried, half turning.

"It don't matter, Jen," returned the plain-clothesman, whose hand rested upon her shoulder. "Come along."

There was no resistance; there were no further recriminations. They passed up the street and into the clean front room of the building which served as police headquarters. In a moment more they were in the presence of the chief, who listened attentively to the few words spoken by one of the detectives. And then the great man frowned.

"So you're Peter Dunn, private detective, are you?" he asked the quiet man. "Seems as though I've heard of you before. And you, Mrs. Jen; how does it feel to be travelin' with a private bull?" Then he turned quickly to the officers. "Search 'em both; the matron ain't busy. And if Gray's still walking up and down the hall like a crazy man, tell him to come in here."

Just as the quiet man and the girl were taken from the room another man entered, nodded to the chief, and walked over to the official's desk. He was quite an ordinary-looking person, was this newcomer. His hair was fiery red and evidently of a rebellious disposition, for it did not conform to the ordinary rules prescribed for hair. It refused to lie flat. The blue eyes of this person were plainly made to twinkle, and their owner allowed them to have their own way. His dress was that of a chap who thinks a lot more about other things than he does about his clothes, although his costume seemed to be particularly appropriate for just the sort of person he was. Good nature fairly oozed from him—the good nature of comparative youth that knows no reason for hating the world.

The Chief returned the newcomer's nod and pulled out a chair beside him for his visitor.

"I reckon," he said, "you'll have some fun just about now. They've pinched Peter Dunn and Jen Greggs."

"Ah! She was with him?" asked the red-headed man.

"Course," affirmed the Chief. He turned as Philip Gray burst into the room, his hair disheveled, his face haggard and worn from the excitement of waiting. He had not been able to leave headquarters where he would get any news about his money the moment the thief was brought in. He had been there for over two hours, kept in ignorance of what was going on, but striding up and down the hallway.

"First off," the Chief said to Gray, "you don't have to worry about your wife. She's at home, and she's been there all the time. If you hadn't been in such a hurry this morning, when you lost your fifty thousand, you might have found out that Mrs. Gray, having a headache, slept in what she calls the guest room. So your wife's all right. She phoned us to that effect."

"I'm—I'm awfully relieved," Gray stammered. Then, looking at the red-haired person, he murmured something about his desire that no strangers should hear the results of the investigation.

"That's all right, Mr. Gray," said the Chief reassuringly. "This gentleman's a friend of mine."

"Of course, Chief, of course," muttered the distracted Gray. "But about the money—is there any news yet?"

"You'll have to wait a minute," responded the official. "An' meanwhile I might as well tell you something that'll make you appreciate the New York police force. We get a few uncomplimentary things said about us sometimes. Might just as well have a bit of good publicity for a change. Now, a man called up your house this morning just after you left and asked if there was any trouble there."

Gray gave a gasp of astonishment and came closer to the desk.

"How—how did he know?" he exclaimed.

"He talked with your wife, an' she told him all about the robbery and Peter Dunn and all the rest of it. The housekeeper, who you stopped to talk to before you left home, told your wife, so she was posted, you see."

"Of course, of course; I had sense enough to tell the housekeeper all about it."

"But you didn't tell her you were comin' here," the Chief went on. "And knowin' that you haven't got much confidence in banks or in the police, your wife didn't think you'd come here. It was the chap who called her up who told us all this over the phone, at the same time asking me to be on the watch for the man you call Peter Dunn. Now, Mr. Gray, this Peter Dunn, not expecting that you'd complain about him, didn't have any idea we'd have all the joints watched. You see, we got his description from the man that got us to help him to round up this Peter Dunn."

"Did—did Dunn steal the money? Have you got him?" The questions came so fast from Gray that the Chief could not restrain his amusement. In the pause that followed one of the plain-clothes men came into the room, ushering Dunn in before him. Just an instant Philip Gray stared, then he ran straight up to the prisoner, seized him by the lapels of his coat, and fairly burst out with the words:

"You've got him; you've got my money?"

Gravely, almost solemnly, the quiet man replied.

"It was not half an hour ago," he said slowly, "that I was saying to a girl friend of mine that I was the person to catch the offender if any one could. Yes, your money is safe."

For the first time the twinkle left the eyes of the red-haired, good-humored person sitting beside the Chief. He turned to that worthy and spoke seriously.

"I've always said," he remarked, "that Melancholy Joe was a good sport—a game loser."

Just then the plain-clothesman stepped forward quickly with a big wallet.

"It's all here, sir," he said to the Chief. "Every cent of the $50,000 was in his wallet."

"Good!" exclaimed the Chief as Gray, amazed and bewildered, looked from one to the other of the four men in the room. And now the quiet man looked straight at the red-haired person sitting beside the Chief.

"I presume," he said quietly, "that you are the one who tipped the Chief off to be on the lookout for me."

"I did," returned the red-haired one, smiling.

"Just as a matter of curiosity," the prisoner went on, as the grin on the face of the Chief broadened, "I would like to know how you connected me with this affair?"

"Joe," began the other, and there was no unkindness in the tone of the good-natured chap, "you had a good moment yesterday. I wish it had lasted. In the past I've come near getting you with the goods several

times, and I've always failed, but you knew that I knew you were guilty each time. Yet you've beaten me, and you would have beaten me to-day probably if it had not been for that impulse that made you come to my office and write me that note on the typewriter. I wasn't out of the office ten minutes, but it was long enough. I thought I'd snapped the latch, but evidently it didn't catch or you wouldn't have got into my office so easily while I was out."

There was absolute silence in the big room.

"You see, Joe," he went on, "you were probably writing that note when Gray came in and mistook you for me. You couldn't have been looking at the typewriter and the paper when you pulled that note out of it, for you left a carbon copy of your letter in the machine."

"How did you know about my note to you?" came the question from the prisoner.

The red-headed individual pulled a sheet of yellow paper from his pocket.

"This is the carbon copy of your note," he said. "I found it on the floor after I came back to the office from lunch. I usually have a carbon sheet prepared, as you found it. I knew you had been there; this note telling me that you were going straight gave it all away. But you never mailed me the original, for just as you wrote the note Gray came in. And perhaps you might have gone straight; perhaps you intended to, and perhaps you didn't, Joe. When Mr. Gray came in and wanted a detective to guard his $50,000 chance tempted you, Joe, so your good resolution to reform petered out and you grabbed this chance to rob Gray."

From his place almost beside the detective Philip Gray rushed forward and peered into the good-natured face of the chap with the red hair.

"Who—who in the world are you, sir?" he exclaimed.

"I happen to be the man you came to see, but didn't see, yesterday, Mr. Gray. I am Peter Dunn."

"And," stammered Gray, his wits straggling along in the wake of the startling developments, "how in the world did you know that I had been in your office while you were out?"

"I knew Joe had been there," came the smiling response, and I suspected that he might impersonate me, for you had left your calling card on which you had made a memorandum of the money you wanted guarded. When I called up your house I realized that the 'guard' for the $50,000 must have been Joe. The rest," and he turned to the Chief, "was done by our efficient police head and the watchful men under him."

For a moment there was silence, but finally that silence was broken by the Chief.

"Mr. Gray," he said, with emphasis on the "Mister," "aren't you going to thank Peter Dunn for getting back your fifty thousand dollars?"

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," published semi-monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1923. State of New York, County of New York:—Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Luis Senarens, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication, for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to-wit:

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LUIS SENARENS, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of September, 1923.—Seymour W. Steiner. (My Commission expires March 30, 1924.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
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99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "The Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
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103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
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115 "A Man From Headquarters," by H. Craigie.
116 "The Girl in the Case," by Carl Glick.
117 "A Scientific Detective," by D. G. McDonald.
118 "Number Nine Queer Street," by Jack Bechdolt.
119 "Trailed by a Private Detective," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
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140 "For Shame," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
141 "The Triple Cross," by Hamilton Craigie.
142 "Blood Rubies," by J. Werner Phelps.
143 "I'll Win! I'll Win!" by Arthur B. Reeve and Margaret W. Reeve.
144 "Phantom Fingers," by George Bronson-Howard.

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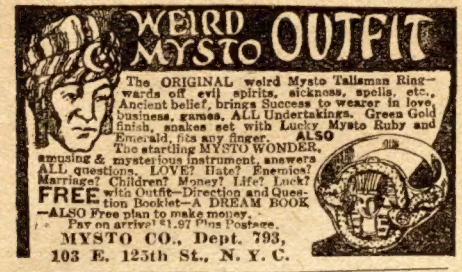
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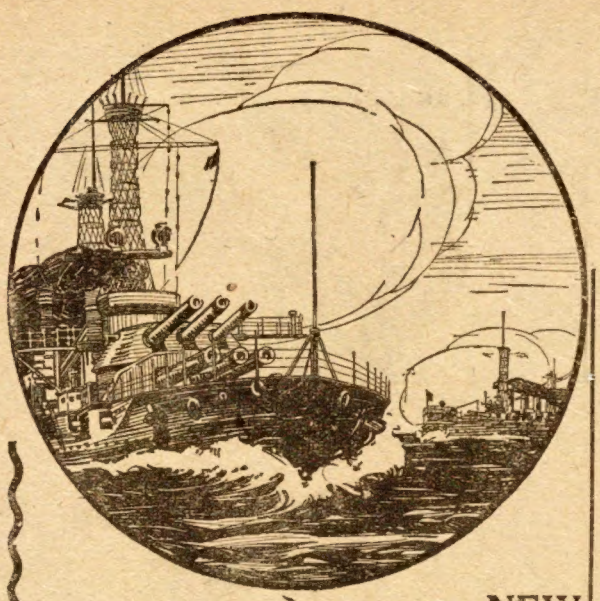

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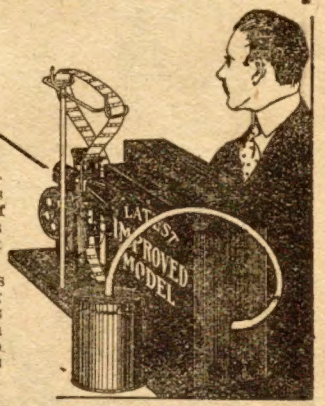

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